

WATERS OF JUSTICE AND RIVERS OF RIGHTEOUSNESS:

THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN IN PUBLIC POLICY

A THESIS

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BY

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to the glory of God the Father,
revealed in his Son, Jesus Christ,
to his bride, the Church,
through the power of the Holy Spirit.

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

—Philippians 2:1-11 (NRSV)

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the role of the Christian in the public square through theological and ethical reflection on Christian engagement in the public square. This is accomplished by means of an exploratory case study of the work of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Building Solutions Committee from March through June 2006 and participant interviews. Questions of theology and praxis examined include:

1. What is meant by the term when one speaks of "politics?"
2. Should the public square be "naked" in general and specifically, relative to the Christian faith, and does faithful discipleship require engagement in the public square?
3. What unique insights might Christian theology offer in relation to public education and what would these insights sound like in a "clothed" public square?
4. How have previous efforts by Christians in the public square fared historically, i.e., have they been "successful," and is "success" even an appropriate measuring stick in this context?
5. Should Christians aspire to and seek positions of power, and if so, how should that power be exercised?

The central research question explored is how Christians may act faithfully in the public square, i.e., how does one's faith in Christ influence one's position and decision-making. The Reformed theological tradition as interpreted in mainline Presbyterianism in the United States informs this examination. An additional tool is the analytical survey for congregations presented in James F. Hopewell's *Congregation: Stories and Structures*, which is used to explore potential insights regarding the theological placement and worldview of the interviewees in relation to one another and how this reflects on their ability to unite around the vision of a particular leader.

The thesis concludes that faithfulness rather than success is a more appropriate metric for understanding Christian public engagement. A covenantal framework based in a synthetic relationship between justice and righteousness, resolving in steadfast love, combined with a kenotic approach to the exercise of power and authority, is posited to yield a viable basis upon which to engage in the public square. The thesis further concludes that the post-Constantinian church in western society does not adequately prepare Christian disciples to engage in the public square because of an inadequate understanding of the relational aspects of righteousness and of the image of the kenotic Christ in relation to the exercise of power and authority.

PROLOGUE

Charlotte, North Carolina, the community in which I reside, has come to a crossroads at which it must decide what type of community it is going to be. It is largely a time of crisis, a point at which the community remains deeply divided about the future of its education system, which is but one of many issues defining the character of the community. Believing deeply in the sovereignty of God in all human affairs, I believe that Christians are placed into such contexts because from the perspective of Christian faith, there are no crises, only moments of God's *kairos* manifesting themselves and revealing God's glory to those who are willing to see. In the winter of 2005, I found myself in such a moment, situated at the heart of events surrounding my community's efforts to move itself to the next stage of the struggle I will describe in greater depth herein.

It was not a place where I would have envisioned myself twenty-five years before. Having graduated from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville with a degree in mechanical engineering, I came to be employed by Duke Power Company in Charlotte in June 1982. Five months later, I came to faith at Forest Hill Presbyterian Church, a congregation of what would become the reunited Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. As a single male, I had little reason to be interested in the politics of the public schools during the first five year period I lived in Charlotte. I was aware of Charlotteans who had withdrawn their children from the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) and placed them in private schools because of their adverse reaction to busing. Without much reflection on their concerns, I mostly attributed such sentiments to racism.

In 1987, I left Charlotte to attend Columbia Theological Seminary, completing a Master of Divinity degree in 1990. Following graduation, I returned to my previous vocation as an engineer and was ordained in 1992 as a tentmaking minister. This path would lead back to Charlotte in 1999, where once again I came to be employed by Duke. By this time I had been married for nine years and had two daughters, ages three years and three months, respectively. Schools were not a particular consideration in choosing a location to live. The primary consideration was proximity to work. We wished to live in Charlotte rather than one of the surrounding communities, so we purchased a home in what is loosely called the "Steele Creek" community that April.

In the fall of that year, we placed our older daughter in a church pre-school in our subdivision, and soon we began to hear rumblings about the condition of the public schools in the area. At that time, residential development in Steele Creek had been sparse, a condition that was to change dramatically over the next seven years. With this population growth, comprised largely of middle to upper middle class families, came high expectations for public schools and academic achievement. These expectations were not particularly well met at that time in any of the three public schools serving our area. The North Carolina ABCs of Education performance composites¹ for Lake Wylie Elementary School, Kennedy Middle School and Olympic High School that year were 68.5, 64.1 and 38.2, respectively.²

¹ "ABCs 2006 Accountability Report Background Packet," (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2006), 5. "The performance composite indicates what percentage of students' scores in each school are at or above grade level (Achievement Level III). Schools are recognized for the percentage of students performing at this proficiency level and whether they made their growth goals."

² "A Report Card for the ABCs of Public Education Volume I: 1998-1999 Growth and Performance of Public Schools in North Carolina Growth/Gain and Performance of Schools," (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1999).

Furthermore, in light of its continued trend of low performance, state assistance teams had been assigned to Olympic.³ Panic and outrage set in for us at this point—panic, because I had been so naïve in neglecting the schools in my considerations for where to live, and outrage because I could not conceive how a community could tolerate the existence of a high school where over 60 percent of its students were unable to perform on grade level.

Further investigation only increased my frustration. At the time, the case of *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*⁴ had been re-opened, forcing the community to revisit matters long thought settled. As the *Swann* case wound its way through the courts, it seemed to me that the past history of race relations in Mecklenburg County had so consumed this community and its school system that it could see little else mattering. To paraphrase the sentiment of many at the time, "these people" cared more about whom our children were

³ "ABCs 2006 Accountability Report Background Packet," (North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 2006).

⁴ *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*, 402 U.S. 1 (1971). Darius and Vera Swann had been Presbyterian missionaries in India, and their son, James, had been educated in integrated Indian schools. Returning to Charlotte in 1964, James Swann was denied admission to the school closest to their home, a school with 297 white students and 26 black students, and assigned instead to an all-black school. When the Board of Education denied their request for reassignment, the Swanns joined a court case against the system that eventually came to be known as *Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education*.

The case ran its course over the next six years, being decided in favor of the Board of Education in 1965 only to be reopened in 1969 based on new rulings and precedents with the result that CMS was determined not yet to be desegregated. The Board was directed to submit a plan for desegregation of the system "... to consider all known ways of desegregation, including busing." The ruling was appealed and upheld by the U. S. Supreme Court in 1971.

Busing continued over the next twenty-five years. Then in 1997, William Capacchione sued CMS when his daughter was twice denied entrance to a magnet school, alleging racial discrimination. This resulted in the Swann case being reactivated and consolidated with Capacchione's suit. In September 1999, the U. S. District Court declared CMS unitary and ruled that CMS could no longer use race as a factor in student assignment. This ruling was also eventually appealed to the Supreme Court, which, in refusing to hear the case, declined to overturn the ruling.

sitting next to than whether they were learning anything there. Politically, the situation of neglect in Steele Creek was compounded by the districting of the community. At that time, the Steele Creek area was included in Board of Education District 1, a majority Republican district in northern Mecklenburg County that had been gerrymandered down the eastern shore of the Catawba River, wrapping around to Steele Creek like a giant letter "C," a seeming afterthought with most of its constituency located at the top of the "C." As a result, Steele Creek garnered very little attention from elected officials.⁵

Three events occurred over the next year that put me on a trajectory of political engagement. First, on December 7, 1999, the Presbytery of Charlotte's Committee on Mission and Justice invited three members of the Board of Education to its stated meeting to speak to the Presbytery. The discussions concerned the recent decision by Judge Potter concerning the unitary status of CMS and where the school system would proceed from there. Arthur Griffin, Molly Griffin and Jim Puckett are all Presbyterian elders. Jim Puckett, the only Republican of the three,⁶ was unable to attend. Therefore, although I eventually came to know these three to be people deeply motivated by their faith, albeit in different ways, the presentation seemed to be biased in one direction. I left that meeting afternoon deeply upset by the presentations and other actions taken by the presbytery in response to them.

⁵ By comparison, conditions of school overcrowding that were soon to plague the Steele Creek area were already in full bloom in the northern suburban townships of Huntersville, Cornelius and Davidson, as well as the southern townships of Pineville, Matthews and Mint Hill.

⁶ The CMS Board of Education is nominally non-partisan. However, given the nature of political districts in Mecklenburg County, three of the six districts will tend to elect Democrats, and the other three will tend to elect Republicans. This makes the outcome of the three county at-large seats pivotal for the political direction of both the Board of Education and the County Commission. The reader should recall that when a Republican or a Democratic Board of Education candidate is identified as such herein, this is in the context of a nominally non-partisan board that has been rendered partisan nonetheless.

Second, in the fall of 2000, I began to feel a deep level of dissatisfaction in my ministry after ten years of supply preaching with no long-term continuity in a particular congregation. This culminated in my application to the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary in order to pursue interests in leadership development.

Third, on November 7, 2000, Jim Puckett, the CMS Board of Education representative for District 1, was elected to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners as the District 1 County Commissioner.⁷ The following month the Board of Education announced that it would take applications to fill Mr. Puckett's vacancy.⁸ On January 9, 2001, along with roughly twenty other applicants for the vacancy, I appeared before the Board of Education to state my reasons for wishing to be appointed to the Board.

They selected someone else two weeks later. Bob Simmons, a local attorney, ended up being a driving force in bringing about approval of the choice plan and was, in my opinion, the right person for the job at the right time. Because of Bob's professional background and his credibility as a supporter of busing, he was uniquely positioned to convince a Board unwilling to move towards its next transitional step that the time had come to do so.

Having been unsuccessful in being appointed to the Board of Education, I spent the next six months evaluating other options. First, it was obvious at that point that the Board of

⁷ The district boundaries for the County Commission and for the Board of Education are identical in Mecklenburg County.

⁸ Vacancies on the Board of Education are filled by appointment of a majority of the other Board members.

Education was not about to appoint a complete unknown.⁹ Recognizing a point of contact with a good number of the Board of Education members in our shared Christian faith, I set about to establish relationships with them on that basis, meeting them individually as they were available. In the process I gained insight into their motivations while at the same time hopefully gaining their understanding of my concerns if not always their trust. I also began to attend Board of Education meetings on a regular basis.¹⁰

During the intervening months, the County Commission redrew the county's electoral districts based on the results of the 2000 census. This resulted in the Steele Creek area being redistricted into District 2, a majority African-American, majority Democrat district due in large measure to its inclusion of the population north of Interstate 85 and west of Interstate 77. To be blunt, there was no way I could win an election given the demographics and political affiliation of the majority of the District's voters. As a result, Vilma Leake, the District 2 incumbent, ran unopposed that year.

⁹ Ironically, on August 8, 2006, a little over five years later, the Board of Education did exactly that in appointing Trent Merchant to an at-large vacancy. Cf. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *Board of Education names Trent Merchant to vacant seat*, <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/includes/gfi.asp?fileHandle=3483.asp> (accessed December 10, 2006).

¹⁰ From 2001 to 2004, with few exceptions, I attended every regularly meeting of the Board of Education, twice a month, and stayed for the duration of the meetings. As I discovered over time, this was one key way in which to gain credibility with the Board of Education members. Parents and other advocates regularly come to Board of Education meetings, have their say about the issues that concern them and then leave once they are done speaking. Often they will bring along supporters who will wave signs in order to be noticed for their numbers and in some cases to be seen on television having a strong turnout. However, it has been my experience that those who attend regularly and stay for the duration of the meetings (an often excruciating experience, particularly when the meetings start at 6:00 p.m. and may run past 11:00 p.m.) are the ones who have the best chance of being taken seriously. Remaining after meetings often provides the best opportunity to be able to speak face to face with elected officials. It is surprising, then, that over that four year period, Norm Gundel and I were the only persons who did this regularly.

During this time I also became acquainted with the District 6 Board of Education representative, Lindalyn Kakadelis. Having decided not to seek re-election, she put me in contact with her friend, Lee Kindberg, who would be running to fill the District 6 vacancy that fall. In helping Dr. Kindberg with her campaign, I also became acquainted with Norman Gundel, an education advocate in District 1 who considered running for the District 1 seat but opted instead to manage Dr. Kindberg's campaign.

On the evening of December 11, 2001, the swearing in of the Board of Education was followed by a reception to thank the outgoing Board members and to welcome the incoming members. I was invited to the reception by Dr. Kindberg, who had won her race, for having assisted with her campaign. I had been thinking about strategy over the previous month, and I had come to realize that working against Mrs. Leake would be a fruitless effort. The widow of a bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Zion Church, Mrs. Leake remains a very active and devoted servant of that denomination. Seeing her across the room that night, I made a decision that would define my path for the next six years. Having by this time become acquainted with her, I explained to her that I had no intention of running against her. I was a Presbyterian minister, and she was a Methodist minister's wife, and if she and I as two Christian people could not figure out between us how to work together for the good of all the children in the system, then what hope was there for the rest of the community? She agreed with me, and since that time, we have become good friends.

In the fall of 2001, my older daughter entered kindergarten at Lake Wylie Elementary School, and soon my wife and I became active in the school, my wife serving as a room mother and assisting in the school's media center, while I became a member of the School

Leadership Team, a team of administrators, staff and parents charged with "[providing] leadership for the school in developing and implementing the School Improvement Plan."¹¹ I would come to chair the committee for three of the four years I served on that committee. Service on the School Leadership Team became a springboard for further engagement. While academic performance improved over the succeeding years, the primary challenge faced by Lake Wylie would be overcrowding of the facility. As the population grew in the Steele Creek area, the Lake Wylie student population likewise soared.¹² Occurring at a time when CMS was just beginning to address long range planning under the new student assignment plan that was implemented following the *Swann* decision, this growth challenged CMS staff to address it.

In response to the increased overcrowding, CMS placed additional mobile classrooms at Lake Wylie, eventually crowding out other outside amenities such as ballfields and playground space. Where three trailers had been in service during the 2001-2002 school year, by the end of the 2005-2006 school year there were forty in service. With literally more students outside the building than inside by 2005, issues ranging from the security of

¹¹ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *A Handbook For School Leadership Teams*, <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/resources/documents/schoolLeadershipTeams.asp> (accessed July 20, 2007). The SLT is based on the Comer School Development Process. Cf. Yale Child Study Center, *Comer School Development Program*, <http://www.med.yale.edu/comer> (accessed July 7, 2007)—"a school and system-wide intervention formulated by Dr. James P. Comer, Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine's Child Study Center ... Dr. Comer uses a metaphor of six developmental pathways to characterize the lines along which children mature—physical, cognitive, psychological, language, social, and ethical. The SDP school community uses the six developmental pathways as a framework for making decisions that will benefit children."

¹² Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools School Profiles, 1999-2006*, <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/instrAccountability/schlProfile05/profiles.asp> (accessed July 8, 2007). Based on an adjusted capacity of 748 seats, Lake Wylie's student population increased from 958 students at the end of the 1999-2000 school year (128% utilization) to 1,508 at the end of the 2005-2006 school year (202% utilization). Even today, my older daughter's cohort represents a "bow wave" of students that rolls through the schools of the area, challenging the capacities of the facilities.

children isolated from the main building and proper sheltering during inclement weather¹³ to the logistics of how to serve lunch to twice as many children as the facility was meant to serve,¹⁴ the Lake Wylie staff faced significant distractions from its core educational focus.

Thus began a four year mission to raise awareness of this situation with the central office staff at CMS and the Board of Education and to get a relief school built in the area. While conditions in the Steele Creek area had just begun booming, conditions in District 1, the northern part of Mecklenburg County, had already boomed and had already reached crisis proportions a few years before.¹⁵ Anger among northern suburban residents had been building for some time and was about to explode politically. On the evening of September 8, 2003, a new advocacy group formed among the residents of northern Mecklenburg County that would change the direction of the political conversation throughout the entire community. Families United for North Mecklenburg Education (FUME), under the leadership of Rhonda Lennon, a Huntersville parent of three, emerged as a political force.¹⁶

Timed to coincide with the September 23 meeting to the Board of Education to approve the CMS long range facilities master plan and the upcoming November 4 general election, the group set out an ambitious plan to draw attention to its concerns. First, they would lobby

¹³ Peter Smolowitz, "Weather Warning Gives School a Test - Students Huddled in Halls until Threat of Tornado Passed," *The Charlotte Observer*, September 8, 2004.

¹⁴ The "multipurpose room," a combined cafeteria and gymnasium/assembly area with a partition midway between the kitchen and the stage, eventually became solely a cafeteria, and a double-wide trailer has served as the physical education facility for four years at this writing.

¹⁵ Celeste Smith, "Northsiders Organize Push for More Schools - Parents Upset by CMS Handling of Crowding," *The Charlotte Observer*, September 9, 2003.

¹⁶ Ibid.

the Board of Education to influence the outcome of the proposed long-range plan and continue to focus attention on the severe overcrowding in north Mecklenburg schools going forward. Second, they would endorse three of the eleven candidates running for three at-large seats on the Board of Education.

However, where FUME differed from so many angry advocacy groups that preceded it was in its posture:

Lennon watched the frustration conveyed by parents in earlier northern Mecklenburg movements fighting for exactly what FUME wants - more closer, less crowded schools. She wanted FUME instead to have a "positive" voice.

That image is resonating with observers.

"I have to say they have been positive in their approach," said Superintendent James Pughsley before a meeting Monday night to go over the group's concerns.

"They've done their homework, and they have presented (information) not in an adversarial manner, but in a professional manner."¹⁷

Norm Gundel and I had spent several years building relationships with Board of Education members, which made Rhonda Lennon's arrival on the scene in the fall of 2003 nothing short of catalytic. While Mr. Gundel and I had established a foundation upon which everything else that has come after has been built, there really is no question that apart from Rhonda Lennon's unique talents coming into the equation, Mr. Gundel and I would have continued making only marginally near the impact the three of us were able to accomplish together over the next two years. The reaction to FUME among the political candidates and leaders set an example for others in education advocacy regarding the need for organization on a large, visible scale.

Mention vocal parent groups and many people think of FUME, the north Mecklenburg crew that burst into public view this fall with demands for relief from school crowding.

¹⁷ Celeste Smith, "Crowded Schools Spark Campaign - Mother Organizes Concerned Parents in North Mecklenburg," *The Charlotte Observer*, September 30, 2003.

Energized by a school board election and rattled by talk that the district might force students into schools with vacant seats, the parents quickly became a significant voice in the debate about student assignment.

Their efforts have spawned admiration and resentment.

Michael Murdock, a parent leader at crowded Lake Wylie Elementary, has met with FUME leaders to talk about forming a similar group in southwestern Mecklenburg.

"If we don't start waving the flag down at our end of the county," he said, "we're going to get missed."

Some African-American activists have questioned the motives of the mostly white FUME (a loose acronym for Families United for North Mecklenburg Education). But they quietly acknowledge they'd do well to replicate the group's effectiveness.

Dwayne Collins, a leader in Mecklenburg's Black Political Caucus and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People branch, has repeatedly urged CMS to rethink its student assignment plan. By tying assignment to neighborhoods, he argues, the district has allowed many to become pockets of disadvantage, where teachers must work far harder to get students working at grade level. That makes it hard to attract top-notch veteran staff, he and others say.

But the same few spokesmen often stand alone. They plan to meet soon to talk about how to "ignite a fire among those who not only now but historically have received the short end of the stick," Collins said.¹⁸

In October 2003, I organized Families Leading Advocacy for Mecklenburg Education (FLAME) under the auspices of the Lake Wylie School Leadership Team to establish a presence similar to FUME's in southwest Mecklenburg County. The challenge faced by all groups advocating CMS capital spending at that time was significant. In 2002, Republicans gained a 5 to 4 majority on the County Commission and set about to instill what they considered a measure of fiscal discipline in CMS.¹⁹ This majority believed that the CMS operating budget was bloated and needed to be reined in. The means they chose to do so

¹⁸ Ann Doss Helms, "Lack of School Choice Spurring Neighbors - Parents Fight for What They Want, Try to Fix What They Have - As Activist Group in North Finds a Voice, More Families Push to Find What's Best for Their Kids," *The Charlotte Observer*, January 28, 2004.

¹⁹ Funding for CMS is a complex matter. Basic operating funds for North Carolina public schools are provided by the State of North Carolina. Infrastructure needs are funded by the local county government. However, in the case of CMS, because of the higher cost of living in the Charlotte area and the larger number of high needs students drawn to the community, the County Commission has provided supplemental funding of the CMS operating budget for a number of years. Additional federal operating funds are received in the form of grants and Title I funding. Although some capital funding has been provided by state bond issuance and the recent implementation of a state education lottery, the vast majority of capital funding for infrastructure needs in CMS is provided in the form of bonded debt issuance by the County Commission.

was twofold. First, they held the operating budget supplements for CMS flat for three successive years. Second, since payment of the annual debt service for CMS is equivalent to an operating expense, the Republicans used the capital budget as a lever against the operating budget by 1) implementing a policy of approving CMS bond referenda only in even-numbered election years, i.e., during those years when the County Commission members were up for re-election and thus could be held accountable for their decisions regarding such funding and 2) by trying, albeit unsuccessfully, to offset increases in CMS debt service with equal decreases in its *operating* budget.

A bond referendum had passed in November 2002 and had included, in addition to growth and renovation funding, design-only funding for facilities deemed so critical that they could not wait until a potential November 2003 bond referendum to start project design work. It was anticipated that construction funding would be provided in a November 2003 referendum. Unfortunately, there would be no November 2003 bond referendum.²⁰

However, two of the three at-large Board of Education candidates endorsed by FUME were elected in the November 4, 2003 general election, which set the stage for the next phase of advocacy.

Following the election, Rhonda Lennon and I both applied to be appointed to the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee.²¹ In order to increase our chances of gaining

²⁰ In fact, there would be no November 2004 bond referendum, either, as it turned out.

²¹ Mecklenburg County, *Capital Improvement Program*, <http://charmec.org/Departments/County+Managers+Office/Business+Management/Capital+Improvement+Program/Home.htm> (accessed July 23, 2007). The Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee is an advisory committee to the County Commission with nine members appointed by the County Commission and

appointments, I quietly let Board of Education members know that if they were inclined to appoint her, I would be glad to yield their support for me and take my chances with getting a County Commission appointment to the Committee. At the February 10, 2004 meeting, Ms. Lennon was appointed as one of the two Board of Education liaisons.²²

Norm Gundel had been appointed to the CMS Bond Oversight Committee²³ early in 2002, reappointed to the committee in September 2003 and became its chairman in February 2005, and he would continue in that capacity through September 2006.²⁴ As a group of likeminded advocates and political allies, we now had a leadership role on the Board of Education's citizen advisory committee for capital funding and a membership role on the County Commission's citizen advisory committee for capital funding. With Ms. Lennon chairing the Schools subcommittee of the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee, only one domino remained to fall into place.

I was appointed to the Committee by the County Commission on July 13, 2004, and when I attended my first meeting August 10, 2004, to my surprise, I was chosen by the committee to be its vice chair. When the review process for FY 2006 began in March 2005, unbeknownst

two voting liaison members appointed by the Board of Education to review and make recommendations regarding proposed capital projects for Mecklenburg County. Members serve up to three two-year terms.

²² Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *Minutes, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Regular Board Meeting, February 10, 2004*, http://documents.cms.k12.nc.us/dsweb/Get/Document-5206/021004_Regular_Board_Meeting.doc (July 22, 2007).

²³ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *Tough Questions on the School Bonds*, <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/departments/publicInformation/bonds0203/toughquestions.asp?id=1> (accessed July 23, 2007). The Bond Oversight Committee reviews each bond-funded project and regularly reports on the legitimacy of proposed projects and how approved bond funds are spent.

²⁴ Norman L. Gundel, e-mail to the author, July 23, 2007.

to the County staff and to me, the chairman of the Committee had resigned some time beforehand. Absent a chairman, it fell to me as the vice chairman to initiate get the review process.²⁵ This led to me being appointed chairman of the Committee by the County Commission.²⁶ Subsequently, Ms. Lennon succeeded me as vice chair. In the space of a year, the three of us had managed to get ourselves appointed to positions of influence that would significantly impact the nature of the debate about CMS capital funding and the upcoming November 2005 bond referendum.

At the Board of Education's January 13, 2004 meeting, Mr. Gundel and Ms. Lennon presented a proposed framework for CMS capital funding on behalf of FUME that would change the nature of the discussion dramatically as evidenced by the fact that eventually this framework became the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee standard for CMS capital funding review. Furthermore, although the County Commission never adopted or approved this standard specifically,²⁷ the framework was well-received by the County staff and quietly made its way into the underlying basis for the staff's recommendations to the County Commission.

The FUME framework could be summarized as follows—CMS and Mecklenburg County were in a hole with regard to school facilities spending, and they had a primary obligation

²⁵ Michael L. Murdock, e-mail to Dumont Clarke, March 2, 2005.

²⁶ Parks Helms, e-mail to the author, March 3, 2005.

²⁷ Other Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee review standards have the explicit approval of the County Commission. Cf. Mecklenburg County, *Mecklenburg County Board of Commissioners Budget/Public Policy Agenda, Tuesday, January 13, 2004*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/BOCC/Meetings/Archives/Agendas+Archive/2004+Meeting+Agendas/01-12-04.htm> (accessed July 30, 2007).

not to dig the hole any deeper, thus the highest priority was assigned to new construction to meet annual growth. However, the equitable distribution of resources necessitated the remediation of the renovation and facilities construction backlogs, i.e., locations with high usage of mobile classrooms, at a rate that would garner broad community support, thus a general inclination to address these two concerns equitably.

In April 2004, Ms. Lennon spearheaded a FUME effort that culminated in the County Commission approving \$98,500,000 in certificates of participation (COPs)²⁸ that funded construction of, among other projects, two northern schools that had been part of the 2002 bond referendum's design-only component, Mallard Creek High School and Bailey Road Middle School. At around the same time, a highly contentious debate was developing in the community regarding reprioritization of bonds previously approved by voters with specific projects in mind.

While COPs must be spent on the specific projects for which they were originally authorized due to the collateralization of the particular property that they are intended to fund, GO bonds are fungible in that regard – except in the political sense, and thus the contention. GO bonds may be redirected legally because they are not tied specifically to a particular property. However, regardless of how generally the bond referendum is described on the ballot, efforts to set the amount of the referendum and to sell the proposal to the voters

²⁸ Cf. NYC Comptroller, *Debt Management*, <http://www.comptroller.nyc.gov/bureaus/pf/faq.shtm> (accessed February 12, 2006)—"General obligation (GO) bonds are backed by the issuer's pledge of its full faith, credit and taxing power for the payment of the bond. GOs are generally viewed as the most secure type of municipal security and typically finance public projects such as schools, parks, libraries, roads and city halls ... Certificates of participation, or 'COPs' as they are commonly known, are typically secured and payable from lease rental payments made by a municipality for use of projects being financed with the COPs."

generally includes a discussion of the projects the bonds are intended to fund, thus the sense of promise and obligation inherent to the approval. With the approval of COPs to fund suburban projects in the spring of 2004 occurring alongside a debate on reprioritization of GO bonds previously approved with inner city and middle ring projects in mind, the inner city and middle ring advocates sensed a betrayal of their trust in the offing.

At the May 25, 2004 Board of Education meeting, Ms. Lennon, Paul Garberina (another FUME parent) and I made an appeal for reprioritization on behalf of our respective organizations at a public hearing.²⁹ The proposed reprioritizations did not include funding for a relief school for Lake Wylie and Steele Creek Elementary Schools, a point I highlighted in my advocacy for the reprioritization, i.e., I was supporting something that would not benefit me directly. Representatives from inner city and middle ring advocacy groups voiced their opposition in equally compelling terms.

On June 8, 2004, the Board of Education voted 7 to 2 to reduce or modify the scope of certain projects and reallocate some of the savings.³⁰ Although these actions represented an effort to redirect some funds in order to address concerns about perceived wasteful spending by CMS, the Board of Education refused to reprioritize, not only the roughly \$80 million in bonds that had been considered and evaluated by the Bond Oversight Committee, or the Bond Oversight Committee recommendation of \$28.7 million, but

²⁹ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *Minutes, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Regular Board Meeting, May 25, 2004*, http://documents.cms.k12.nc.us/dsweb/Get/Document-6020/052504_Regular_Board_Meeting.doc (accessed July 30, 2007).

³⁰ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *Minutes, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Regular Board Meeting, June 8, 2004*, http://documents.cms.k12.nc.us/dsweb/Get/Document-6157/060804_Regular_Board_Meeting.doc (accessed July 22, 2007).

essentially *any* bonds whatsoever. It was a decision that would come back to haunt the Board of Education and the community as a whole the next year.

As a result, FUME and FLAME's strategy for seeking funding shifted focus to lobbying the Board of Education and the County Commission to fund relief for the most urgent overcrowding in the system with COPs. In view of the Board of Education's decision not to reprioritize previously approved bonds, the Republican majority of the County Commission determined that they were not about to have a bond referendum in 2004 either. Had a referendum passed in 2004, bonds would have been issued in January 2005, and construction would have begun almost immediately on the Winget Park elementary school³¹ that would relieve Lake Wylie and Steele Creek Elementary Schools. However, since there would *be* no referendum that year, another strategy would be necessary, namely, lobbying for additional COPs funding to address these near-term needs.

On October 19, 2004, the County Commission approved \$73.9 million in COPs for school construction, including funding for building the new Winget Park elementary school.³² In the space of a year, FUME and FLAME had succeeded in getting the Board of Education and the County Commission to remedy the most critical suburban needs. What remained the next year was to ensure that a broad package of GO bonds addressing the most critical issues across the *entire* county would be put before the voters in November 2005.

³¹ CMS schools do not capitalize a school's name until construction is complete, and the school is ready to open.

³² Richard Rubin, "County OKs Money For New Schools - Construction Will Expand 2 Schools, Build 4 Others In Fast-Growing Areas " *The Charlotte Observer*, October 20, 2004.

In March 2005, CMS submitted to Mecklenburg County a three-year Capital Improvement Plan based on its ten-year Capital Needs Assessment as part of its FY 2006 capital request. However, the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee pressed for a regular schedule of biennial bond referenda based on a two-year Capital Improvement Plan that would be complete or substantially in progress by the time of the next referendum presented the best option for CMS to establish credibility with the voters. Ms. Lennon developed a recommended list of projects based on her own fairly comprehensive knowledge of overcrowding conditions and facilities conditions and proposed this two-year Capital Improvement Plan list to CMS. CMS staff agreed to this approach and presented it to the Board of Education for approval so that a funding request could be made of the County Commission.

With the subsequent approval by the Board of Education that night of the 2005 ten-year Capital Needs Assessment,³³ which incorporated the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee-recommended two-year Capital Improvement Plan, the next step was County Commission approval. The Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee made its presentation to the County Commission on June 8, 2005, recommending a bond referendum in the amount of \$385 million. Using the same list of recommended projects but rounding the costs down, the County Manager had earlier recommended \$380 million.³⁴ However, in what proved to be a fateful turn of events, on June 14, 2005, the Board of Education added

³³ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *Minutes, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Regular Board Meeting, April 12, 2005*, http://documents.cms.k12.nc.us/dsweb/Get/Document-8826/041205_Regular_Board_Meeting.doc (accessed August 3, 2007).

³⁴ Harry L. Jones, *County Manager's Recommended FY05 Budget, May 17, 2005*, <http://charmeck.org/Departments/County+Managers+Office/Business+Management/Prior+Budgets/FY05+Budget/Recommended+FY05.htm> (accessed August 3, 2007).

\$47 million to the County Manager's recommendation, requesting \$427 million.³⁵ The County Commission approved this amount for the November 8, 2005 bond referendum on June 21, 2005.³⁶

The stage was set. In July, Ms. Lennon would file to run against Larry Gauvreau for the District 1 Board of Education seat, and Mr. Gundel would serve as her campaign manager. Since the Board of Education had deviated from the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee recommendation significantly, both in spirit and in letter, I declined to endorse the bond campaign, maintaining neutrality and insisting that all campaign literature not mention or suggest that the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee had recommended the package. All that remained was to await the outcome on November 8, 2005.

³⁵ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *Minutes, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Regular Board Meeting, June 14, 2005*, http://documents.cms.k12.nc.us/dsweb/Get/Document-8253/061405_BRegular_BBBoard_BMeeting.doc (accessed August 3, 2007).

³⁶ Mecklenburg County, *Commission Capsule, June 21, 2005*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/BOCC/Meetings/Archives/Capsules+Archive/2005+Capsules/050621.htm> (accessed August 3, 2007).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

David Chrislip and Carl Larson point to a growing crisis in civic engagement and to change that must be made in the way citizens are engaged in the public square:

A growing sense of anomie pervades the conventional wisdom about the role of citizens in politics. This way of thinking holds that citizens no longer care about public life. They have no sense of civic duty or public purpose. They are apathetic and have no desire to participate in public concerns. Efforts to counter this breakdown usually look no deeper than reforms designed to improve faith and participation in electoral politics. Few people take the time to listen to and understand how Americans really feel about politics and the role they want to play in public life ...

... Rather than being apathetic and unconcerned, citizens are angry and frustrated by politics as usual. They feel cut out of the process, unheard and unable to see how they can have any real impact on public affairs. Government is out of the reach of ordinary citizens. It does not respond to the concerns and needs of individuals, neighborhoods, or communities but to interest groups and power players ...

... But citizens desperately want to be engaged in public life. They want their views to be heard, understood, and considered. They want to have a sense that their involvement can make a difference, that the *public*, not governments or interest groups, defines the public interest ...³⁷

This condition came to be expressed in the current crisis in public education in Charlotte, North Carolina. Located in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, it is a community formed roughly 250 years ago largely by Scots-Irish Presbyterian immigrants. Charlotte and the surrounding North Carolina counties of Mecklenburg, Gaston, Union, Cabarrus, Lincoln and Iredell, as well as York County, South Carolina immediately to the south, have all struggled to address large population increases over the past twenty years.

With this influx of people to the area, the metropolitan community has struggled with how to provide infrastructure to meet the demands of the growth. Conventional wisdom would have suggested that as people moved into the area, the tax base would have risen to meet the

³⁷ David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson, *Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference*, 1st ed., *An American Leadership Forum book* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 3.

challenge. However, this has not been the case. Instead, for a variety of reasons, needs have far outstripped the revenue available to meet them. The single largest demand for capital spending in Mecklenburg County has been the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS), and yet, because of the historical background of the community, this need is accompanied by the greatest amount of contention.

The Charlotte public school system began in 1882 with the creation of two schools, one for whites and one for African-Americans. This system of segregation remained in place even as the Charlotte City Schools and the Mecklenburg County Schools eventually merged in 1960 to form CMS.³⁸ During the intervening years, the United States Supreme Court affirmed the legality of "separate but equal" facilities in its 1896 *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, only to conclude in 1954 in *Brown v. Board of Education* that segregated schools were "inherently unequal."³⁹ This decision would eventually play out in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community in the forced busing that resulted from the *Swann* case from 1971 through 2002.

In *The Fifth Discipline*,⁴⁰ Peter Senge provides an introduction to the concept of "systems thinking" for the lay person. He points out the systemic nature of many complex issues in society and demonstrates how slight "leverage" applied at an advantageous point in such a system can result in a positive overall change in the operation of the system. Conversely,

³⁸ Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *The History of Public Schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg*, <http://www.cms.k12.nc.us/discover/narrative.asp> (accessed February 12, 2006).

³⁹ *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483 (1954).

⁴⁰ Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline : The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Rev. and updated. ed. (New York: Doubleday/Currency, 2006).

leverage applied incorrectly or dramatically, while it may result in a short-term positive change, may result in unanticipated and undesirable long-term consequences.

Though some may question the legal reasoning of the decision,⁴¹ *Brown* nonetheless reversed a fundamentally immoral social arrangement and set the nation on a course of equality of opportunity for all of its citizens. However, in the case of CMS and the school systems of other large, metropolitan areas, the decision laid the groundwork for a different set of problems that face them to this day. While the short-term benefit of *Brown* was to open previously unavailable opportunities for African-Americans, desegregation set in motion the phenomenon of "white flight" to the suburbs as a means of avoiding it.

In November 1999, in response to the court decisions in the *Capacchione* and *Swann* case, CMS Superintendent Eric Smith proposed a new student assignment plan that would send students to schools closer to home and provide families with choice, and in 2002, CMS implemented a new, controlled-choice student assignment plan.⁴² The plan had the predictable effect of pleasing essentially no one in the community. For those who supported student assignment based on neighborhood schools, the plan fell short of their desired goal because it did not guarantee assignment to the school closest to the child's home. For those who supported race-based student assignment plans that eliminate high concentrations of racial-ethnic minorities, the plan not only removed racial balance as a factor for consideration, but it also failed to incorporate consideration of socio-economic status, which

⁴¹ Stephen L. Carter, *Civility: Manners, Morals, and the Etiquette of Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 1998), 204-205.

⁴² Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *The History of Public Schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg*.

often functions as a proxy for race, resulting in high concentrations of high-poverty students in inner city schools.

During busing's twenty-five year lifetime in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, siting of new school construction did not emphasize proximity to centers of population growth. Students could be bused wherever the facilities were located. Thus, for example, a facility like E. E. Waddell High School could be sited on Nations Ford Road in a primarily African-American area of the community prior to implementing the revised assignment plan because a sufficient number of students could be bused into the school to levelize facility utilization across the system. However, once parents were offered some modicum of choice in student assignment, white parents within that "choice zone" tended to choose to send their children to South Mecklenburg High School on Park Road, a school located in a relatively affluent part of south Charlotte.

Deferred maintenance of older facilities in the inner city had long been a point of resentment among minority communities, and as a result, equity of facilities and resources remained an issue in spite of busing. In order to address this resentment, bond referenda during the late 1990s focused largely on renovation of older facilities in order to achieve compliance with CMS baseline facilities standards. Likewise, CMS implemented policies such as differentiated staffing and reduced numbers of students per classroom, e.g., *EquityPlus*, *EquityPlus II* and *FOCUS*, in order to focus resources on schools with high free and reduced lunch (FRL) populations.⁴³

⁴³ CMS, like other school systems, uses FRL status as an indicator of student poverty.

However, implementation of the choice plan exacerbated the effects of socio-economic and racial-ethnic segregation on both sides of the divide. In spite of it not being a "neighborhood schools" plan per se, the choice plan's zones had the effect of causing similar outcomes. Inner city school enrollment plummeted, resulting in facility utilization less than 100%, while FRL concentration skyrocketed. At the same time, school enrollment in the suburbs rose dramatically, resulting in substantial overcrowding, i.e., facility utilization greater than 150%, in some cases greater than 200%.

In both cases, the end result was, and continues to be, further polarization between two camps competing for the resources of the broader community. Throughout the late 1990s, Mecklenburg County voters were inclined to approve bond referenda tilted towards renovation because everyone was "in the same boat" under the *Swann*-based assignment plans. However, with the demographic shift in enrollment patterns under the choice plan, suburban parents, regardless of race and ethnicity, came to resent the system's seeming tone-deafness to the need for new school construction to "build schools where the people are," noting the roughly \$1 billion spent on renovation projects over a ten year period as compared to roughly \$500 million spent on new school construction across the system. Even new schools built in the inner city came to be resented since those schools were now seen to be "half-empty."⁴⁴

⁴⁴ The accusation regarding inner city schools being "half-empty" has been a bit of a red herring. The reason for the situation is, in large measure, the conscious decision to reduce class sizes in these schools in order to focus attention on those students showing the lowest academic achievement. Nonetheless, both camps complained about this condition, both exurban parents who believe the condition resulted from an imbalance in capital spending that now needed to be rectified and urban parents who believed that more spending on renovating schools with the neediest children was necessary and that suburban overcrowding could be relieved by reinstituting busing. Given that a systemwide inventory of facility capacity still shows a deficit of over 25,000 seats, even taking into account reduced urban class sizes, both camps are right, and both camps are wrong.

Thus it was that a political train wreck came to pass. On November 8, 2005, the voters of Mecklenburg County rejected a bond referendum for facilities proposed by the CMS Board of Education in the amount of \$427 million. This referendum was to have been the first installment in implementing a ten-year Capital Needs Assessment for CMS that exceeds \$2.5 billion at the time of this writing.

The rejection of this bond package by 57%⁴⁵ of those who voted was a stunning outcome for its supporters. Many had believed that the measure would pass, albeit by a close margin. Politicians, pundits and people in general were at a loss to explain the reason for the defeat when the elements of the package had been assembled for the expressed purpose of garnering broad community support. Supporters and opponents both could point to reasons why they themselves had voted as they did, but given the widespread opposition across political and ideological lines, no single reason could explain the outcome, save one – the community was angry, and it wanted to "send someone a message."

What remains unclear is what message the community intended to send. The interpretation depends on what segment of the opposition one hears. Was it the voice of suburban voters protesting the 10.6% property tax increase passed by the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners earlier that year, the imbalance between spending on renovation versus construction that has resulted in over 25,000 of the system's 120,000 students attending classes in trailers cynically called "learning cottages" by CMS administrators, or student assignment decisions made by the Board of Education earlier that year? Was it the voice of

⁴⁵ Mecklenburg County Board of Elections, *November 8, 2005 Municipal and School Board Elections Summary*, http://meckboe.org/pages/Election/e_info/general05/summary.html (accessed February 12, 2006).

the so-called "middle ring" voters (outside the city's core but inside the "exurbs"⁴⁶) protesting years of deferred political promises to renovate their school facilities with bonds approved by the community up to ten years before? Was it the voice of inner city voters, also protesting years of deferred political promises to renovate inequitable facilities hearkening back to the days of system-wide racial segregation and the abandonment of a twenty-five year program of school desegregation by forced busing? Or was it simply the collective anger of an electorate tired of the dysfunctional politics of the Board of Education expressing its disgust in one united fit of pique?

Yes. It was all of the above and more. With a 20% overall voter turnout, 54,510 of 503,394 registered voters sent the message that they were dissatisfied with the status quo. The question that faced the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community and its elected officials was how to proceed from that point. At the County Commission meeting one week later on November 15, 2005, the Republican minority proposed to fund only the "growth" portion of the failed referendum using "certificates of participation" (COPs) rather than general obligation (GO) bonds. The Democratic majority of the Board rejected this proposal and instead directed the County Manager to develop a consensus-based process to create a school capital bond package that would be supported by the community.⁴⁷

The County Manager presented this process to the County Commission on December 15, 2005. A 35-member stakeholders group was proposed with membership to be comprised of

⁴⁶ Auguste C. Spector, *The Exurbanites*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1955).

⁴⁷ Mecklenburg County, *School Building Solutions*, <http://www.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/Departments/Consensus-Building/Home.htm> (accessed June 30, 2006).

a chairperson recommended by the County Manager and confirmed by the County Commission; 1 appointee per member of the County Commission and the Board of Education; 1 appointee by the mayor of each Mecklenburg municipality; and 9 appointees by the chair in order to ensure the inclusivity of the stakeholders group. Current elected officials or candidates for elected office would be excluded from consideration. James G. Martin, former North Carolina governor, U. S. Congressman, Mecklenburg County Commissioner and Chairman of the County Commission was appointed by the County Commission to chair the committee. This committee came to be called the School Building Solutions Committee.⁴⁸

The challenges in seeking consensus in a community as divided as Charlotte-Mecklenburg regarding its schools are daunting. A recent study of social capital in the community indicates a level of social trust consistently lower than its national sample.⁴⁹ Yet, the same study notes a high level of faith-based social capital.⁵⁰ On the one hand, this suggests a dichotomy in the witness of the faith community in its broader social context. On the other hand, this suggests a unique opportunity for people of faith, particularly those of the majority Christian faith that bridges the racial, ethnic and socio-economic demographics present in the community, to engage a measure of this faith-based social capital in the pursuit of social trust.

⁴⁸ Mecklenburg County, *School Building Solutions*, <http://www.co.mecklenburg.nc.us/Departments/Consensus-Building/Home.htm> (accessed June 30, 2006).

⁴⁹ Betty Chafin Rash and Bill McCoy, "Social Capital Benchmark Survey: Executive Summary for the Charlotte Region," (Foundation For The Carolinas, 2001), 21.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 23.

Christians possess a unique calling in this context—to be God's ambassadors of reconciliation. (II Cor. 5:20) However, they also face unique challenges related to their historical baggage. It has become almost cliché to speak of the demise of Christendom in western society. Where cultural observers once spoke of "post-Christian" society, today the context is described as "pre-Christian,"⁵¹ and when one speaks of this situation within a political frame, what one really means is that we live in a "post-Constantinian" society. Although in decline since the onset of the Enlightenment, from the ascent of Constantine as Roman emperor in 325 through the middle of the 20th century, Christian moral categories and language have dominated discussions such as these, even when serving merely as the position over against which antagonists established their views.

However, the culture wars of contemporary Western Europe and the United States suggest a growing desire in many quarters to establish a "naked public square,"^{52, 53} a public discourse that has been stripped of religious categories and language, rendering a secularized conversation using language common to all parties. Whether motivated by a desire not to "baptize" a particular political agenda⁵⁴ or in presenting conspiracy theory bases to justify such exclusion of religion from the discussion,⁵⁵ the trajectory of western culture suggests a

⁵¹ Leonard I. Sweet, *SoulTsunami: Sink or Swim in New Millennium Culture* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 45-51.

⁵² Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1984).

⁵³ George Weigel, *The Cube and the Cathedral: Europe, America, and Politics without God* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

⁵⁴ Gregory A. Boyd, *The Myth of a Christian Nation: How the Quest for Political Power Is Destroying the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005).

⁵⁵ Kevin P. Phillips, *American Theocracy: The Peril and Politics of Radical Religion, Oil, and Borrowed Money in the 21st Century* (New York: Viking, 2006).

strong desire to cleanse the public square of religion and its unruly passions. As such, in a pre-Christian world, dominance of the public discourse by Christian moral categories and language can no longer be assumed. Even devout Christians may no longer be assumed to be acquainted with the biblical and theological roots of their cultural engagement. For this reason, it may now be necessary for Christians to re-examine these roots, particularly in relation to politics.

This thesis re-examines the role of the Christian in the public square by means of thorough theological and ethical reflection on a concrete instance of engagement in the public square by people of Christian faith. The mode of this reflection is through a case study on the work of the School Building Solutions Committee and through analysis of the responses of participants who were interviewed as part of this study. This work was conducted from March through June 2006 with the outcome of the Committee's work being determined in July and August of that year. The Committee's work has been characterized widely as having been unsuccessful, even having "failed,"⁵⁶ for no better reason than that in the space of four months it was unable to provide the "silver bullet" that would convince all parties that their particular agendas had been satisfied.

For this reason, examining this particular scope of work in a case study provides a unique opportunity to address questions of "success" in relation to the efforts of Christians serving on the Committee. A case study is selected as the means of examining the Committee's work because when combining researcher observations with the recollections of interviewees as part of the overall examination, a fuller picture of the participants' engagement emerges as

⁵⁶ Ann Doss Helms, "Fragile Accord on School Proposal," *The Charlotte Observer*, June 28, 2006.

seen through certain critical lenses that bear on the particular *Christian* understanding on that engagement.

Whereas the primary mode of case study evaluation that has been used in the Christian Leadership track of the Doctor of Ministry program at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary⁵⁷ has been evaluative, i.e., analyzing the actions of the participants in a case study by means of certain hermeneutical tools, this study will pursue an exploratory mode of examination. In analyzing the actions of the participants in combination with the responses of interviewees, this study will seek not so much to evaluate the actions of the participants according to a fixed set of hermeneutic criteria, but rather to develop insights into possible areas for enhancing the capabilities of Christians to engage in public work as befits their dual citizenship.

A number of questions of theology and praxis arise in relation to such a re-examination:

1. What is meant by the term when one speaks of "politics?"
2. Should the public square be "naked" in general and specifically, relative to the Christian faith, and does faithful discipleship require engagement in the public square?
3. What unique insights might Christian theology offer in relation to public education and what would these insights sound like in a "clothed" public square?
4. How have previous efforts by Christians in the public square fared historically, i.e., have they been "successful," and is "success" even an appropriate measuring stick in this context?
5. Should Christians aspire to and seek positions of power, and if so, how should that power be exercised?

As will be seen in the thesis, many of the principals involved in the work of the School Building Solutions Committee and members of the Board of Education and the County

⁵⁷ Wayne E. Goodwin, "The Case Method: An Exegetical Approach to Evaluating the Practice of Ministry," (Charlotte, NC: Pastoral and Educational Enhancement Resources, Inc., 1999).

Commission are people of deep Christian faith and conviction and brought these beliefs to bear in their work. These people of faith sought a result that would provide the community a viable path forward from the bond referendum defeat, but none of them would have desired to accomplish this by means inconsistent with their professed faith. Indeed, although these persons represent a diversity of faith as broad as the church in the United States, it is an a priori assumption of this thesis that these persons, in spite of any disagreements regarding underlying principles of praxis, would agree that Christian faith requires of them an engagement with the issues facing the public square, in this case, issues regarding the goals and methods of public education as a whole. The central research question that arises from this thesis is how may the Christian act faithfully in contexts such as these, i.e., how does one's faith in Christ influence one's position and decision-making in the public square.

As discussed further in Chapter 4, the Reformed theological tradition as interpreted in mainline Presbyterianism in the United States informs this examination. An additional tool that was explored is the analytical survey for congregations presented in James F. Hopewell's book, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*,⁵⁸ as discussed in Chapter 5 and the Appendix. This tool was used to explore potential insights regarding the theological placement and worldview of the interviewees in relation to one another and how this reflects on their ability, while not a congregation per se, to unite around mission and around the vision of a particular leader.

⁵⁸ James F. Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

This thesis will be organized around the following areas of analysis and reflection:

- Case Narrative

Based on a narrative rendition of the meeting minutes for the School Building Solutions Committee, this chapter provides the "raw data" of the case study, describing the discussions, debate and actions of the Committee's members.

- Biblical and Theological Reflection

This chapter explores certain biblical passages, both Old and New Testament, that bear on the engagement of Christians in a broader socio-political context and reflects on the meaning of these passages in the formation of an overarching theological framework for such engagement.

- Literature Review

This chapter reviews a spectrum of theological literature germane to this topic and seeks to understand how Christians have understood historically the relationship of the church to the broader culture in which it engages in political discourse, and while the overall approach of the case study is not intended to be evaluative, nonetheless, this chapter seeks to discern certain criteria by which these broader historical and cultural influences may be assessed and even whether such criteria are appropriate measures.

- Project Design/Methodology

This chapter further discusses the exploratory case study methodology as well as the nature of the Hopewell assessment survey and how these tools were employed.

- Data Analysis

This chapter reports the results of the various assessments and draws conclusions regarding the work of the School Building Solutions Committee based on the tools described in the methodological discussion that precedes it.

- Final Discussions

This chapter summarizes the project outcomes and suggests possible areas for application in ministry as well as potential areas for study to further enhance the knowledge gained in the project.

CHAPTER 2

CASE NARRATIVE

On February 16, 2006, with the twenty-five appointments by the Board of Education members, the County Commission and the seven area mayors having been made, and with the selection of Governor Martin's nine appointments, the membership of the School Building Solutions Committee was announced publicly.⁵⁹ The committee would be comprised of the following members:⁶⁰

Governor Martin's Appointees	Board of Education Appointees	County Commission Appointees	Mayors' Appointees
Bo Boylan	Malachi Greene	Jerry Fox	Ralph McMillan
Morgan Edwards	Adam Bernstein	Kelly Alexander, Jr.	Rhonda Lennon
Ed Goode	Wesley Simmons	Raymond Owens	Lynn Schmidt
William Grigg	Jason Lewis	Mary Wilson	Ginny Scoggins Setzer
James Kirchner	Rev. Ricky Woods	Violeta Moser	Mark Erwin
James McCoy	Bernard Johnson	Richard McElrath	Lawrence Kimbrough
LuAnn Tucker	Chip Boorman	Tom Davis	Bolyn McClung
Teresa Williams	Tim Morgan	Lindalyn Kakadelis	
Dan Murrey	Jeffrey Ross	John Reid	

The process and funding for the Committee's work were approved by the County Commission on February 21, 2006⁶¹ and by the Board of Education on February 28, 2006.⁶²

⁵⁹ Mecklenburg County, *Martin's Choices Fill Out Roster for School Building Solutions Committee*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/News/release021606.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

⁶⁰ Mecklenburg County, *School Building Solutions Committee*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/stakeholders.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

⁶¹ Mecklenburg County, *Commission Capsule, February 21, 2006*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/BOCC/Meetings/Archives/Capsules+Archive/2006+Capsules/060221.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

⁶² Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, *Minutes, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education Regular Board Meeting, February 28, 2006*, <http://documents.cms.k12.nc.us/dsweb/Get/Document-9503/022806+Regular+Board+Meeting.doc> (accessed September 16, 2007).

During the time immediately preceding the Committee's first meeting, MarketWise, a local marketing research firm, began telephone surveys among Mecklenburg County residents, seeking to understand the reasons why people had voted for or against the bond referendum.⁶³ The case narrative that follows is based largely on the redacted minutes of the School Building Solutions Committee.

March 10, 2006⁶⁴

The Committee's first meeting was held on March 10, 2006 in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center. The meeting began with a discussion by Governor Martin regarding the background leading up to the formation of the Committee, the process and charge of the Committee, and the role of the staff provided by the County and CMS. County Manager Harry Jones then had the Committee members introduce themselves, describing their role in the community and their motivations for serving on the Committee.

The Committee then reviewed the work scope, process and meeting schedule. County General Manager John McGillicuddy discussed the recommended process and schedule for the Committee and concluded by submitting the process framework to the Committee for approval. A number of Committee members expressed concerns about the process framework. Although not all of these concerns are discussed here, certain key concerns that would affect the trajectory of the Committee's work subsequently included the desire to discuss alternative financing and construction methods and to avoid the perception that the

⁶³ Mecklenburg County, *Did You Vote for the School Bonds? Why or Why Not?*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/News/survey022306.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

⁶⁴ Mecklenburg County, *March 10 Meeting Summary*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/March+10+Results.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

Committee was "rubber stamping" a predetermined outcome. The availability of Committee members to meet on Friday afternoons or evenings would also present certain constraints for member participation. The scheduling of afternoon meetings for the majority of the Committee's work effectively excluded Jason Lewis, a radio talk show host whose program aired daily between 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m., from any meaningful participation in its work. Since Mr. Lewis had been appointed to the Committee begrudgingly by Larry Gauvreau, the District 1 Board of Education representative, the publisher of a conservative local weekly newspaper and a strong critic of CMS and its construction and renovation program, a significant voice of opposition to the CMS status quo did not participate beyond the first introductory meeting of the Committee.

Mr. McGillicuddy highlighted that the process framework was a *recommendation* from the design team and that the members must own it and approve it or make changes. It was also noted that the Committee likely would not have time to develop long-term school construction priorities and strategies, by which it was meant that addressing the prioritization of the CMS ten year plan beyond a two to three year horizon would probably be beyond the Committee's ability to effect over a four month period.

A number of comments ensued from the motion to accept the process framework. Tom Davis offered an amended motion to include feedback from the school Parent/Teacher Associations, the School Leadership Teams and parents in Phase 2 of the process framework, but a number of members spoke against it, leaving Mr. Davis as the only person speaking in support of it. The Committee's first vote, then, was to defeat that amendment. A similar amendment by Malachi Greene to include general public feedback in Phase 2 in

view of his concerns regarding the input and buy-in of members of the African-American community likewise failed. An amendment regarding a slight change in the wording of the scope of work and timeline was approved and along with it, the motion to approve the process framework was approved as well.

At this point, the discussion turned to the matter of the Ground Rules governing the Committee's work. As a result of Governor Martin's recommendation against voting by proxy in order to ensure maximum attendance by Committee members, a motion that Committee members must maintain at least 50% of attendance at full Committee meetings in order to vote by written proxy after a final proposal for the capital package had been submitted to the Committee was put forth and subsequently amended to 75% mandatory meeting attendance. That motion, however, was then tabled.

A number of members sought clarification of the definition of consensus as it would be implemented in the Committee's work.

... As the group discussed how to define consensus, Pineville businessman Bolyn McClung noted that the school board and county commissioners grappled with the same question when creating the Martin committee.

"There was at least an hour discussion by both boards as to what consensus was," he said.

"Did they come to agreement?" Martin asked.

"No," said McClung, "they didn't."⁶⁵

The final activity of the meeting involved the distribution of a survey for Committee members. The survey was intended to determine the Committee members' views and positions regarding a number of issues surrounding the Committee's work, including

⁶⁵ Ann Doss Helms and Peter Smolowitz, "Panel Takes 1st Steps Of CMS Trip; Group Starts 16-Week Journey to Decide If Bonds Are the Answer; 35 Volunteer Members Looking for Best Way to Deal with Short Funds and School Crowding," *The Charlotte Observer*, March 11, 2006.

political party affiliation and whether the members had supported the bond referendum or not.

March 17, 2006⁶⁶

The March 17 meeting began with Governor Martin announcing the withdrawal of two members, Mark Miralia and Buster Glossen. In their place, Jeff Ross and Dan Murrey were appointed as alternates. Governor Martin also introduced the project management team from The Lee Institute, represented by Anne Udall, Executive Director, and staff member Jennifer Holland. Discussion regarding the meeting schedule and times then followed. Opinion seemed to vary between Thursday and Friday meetings. Likewise, the members appeared to prefer later meetings, i.e., 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. to earlier ones, i.e., 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Governor Martin then reviewed results from the survey that had been completed the week before. The survey determined that:

Democrats on the Committee outnumber Republicans, but self-described conservatives outnumber liberals by more than four-to-one. A majority voted for school bonds last year, but many had qualms. They're split on student assignment and taxes, but most agree on the need for smaller high schools and the problem of suburban school crowding ...

Martin, a former N.C. governor, said the group represents Mecklenburg County, including the conservative tilt. Of the 28 members who had turned in answers, three described themselves as liberal, 11 as centrists or pragmatists, seven as conservative and seven as very conservative (the "very liberal" option got no takers).

"Many polls have shown that to be true to Mecklenburg County," said Martin, a Republican chosen by both parties to chair the group. Martin said he found surprising areas of agreement, such as support for letting students attend schools close to home and decentralizing CMS.

And he found some expected polarization. Most of the Democrats support breaking up concentrations of school poverty and assigning the best teachers to schools with the most at-risk students, while most of the Republicans disagree.

⁶⁶ Mecklenburg County, *March 17 Meeting Summary*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/March+17+Results.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

Members from both parties - and the unaffiliated voters - split over raising taxes to pay for schools. But Martin said if members hope to create a plan that appeals to a divided community, they have to be candid.

"We have the same differences of view that they have," he said. "I think you need to know that's true so you'll be under no illusions about what it's going to take to find compromises."

Some members questioned the value of knowing the political perspectives and positions of the Committee as a whole—"Lawrence Kimbrough, a retired executive appointed by Davidson's mayor, chided Martin for highlighting differences: 'It doesn't matter whether you're a Democrat or a Republican or a conservative or a liberal if we're going to reach a consensus.'" However, Governor Martin noted in response the need for members to be candid with one another—"We have the same differences of view that they have," he said. "I think you need to know that's true so you'll be under no illusions about what it's going to take to find compromises."⁶⁷

Additionally, the results of a public opinion survey on CMS, conducted by KPC Research and sponsored by Charlotte Observer and WCNC-TV, was presented. This was followed by a presentation by Harry Weatherly, Jr., Mecklenburg County Finance Director, on capital financing and the county's financial position and credit rating. The Committee learned the differences between GO bonds, two-thirds bonds⁶⁸ and COPs. Mr. Weatherly noted the

⁶⁷ Ann Doss Helms, "Martin Hopes Panel's Survey Works as Mirror - Former Governor Says Members Need to See Differences Up Front," *The Charlotte Observer*, March 18, 2006.

⁶⁸ Town of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, *Budget Working Paper*, <http://townhall.townofchapelhill.org/archives/agendas/ca010404/5b-Financing%20Authority%20for%20Local%20Governments%203-27-01.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007). North Carolina general statutes allow governing bodies "to issue bonds each year in an amount equal to two-thirds of the principal amount of debt retired in the previous year. These bonds may be issued without a referendum but must be approved by the [North Carolina Local Government Commission] in the same manner as other debt financing methods."

historical trend of \$170 million annually for CMS capital funding in recent years, also noting that North Carolina state law requires that GO bonds be issued within seven years of their approval by voters. However, he noted, a process exists for extending this period. He also emphasized the importance of bond ratings to the issuing agencies. The City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and the State of North Carolina all have a AAA rating, which translates into lower interest rates for borrowing. In response to a question, Mr. Weatherly offered three examples of why COPs might be pursued over GO bonds: (1) when project must be completed but its cost exceeds the amount of the bonds; (2) when the need for a project emerges quickly and has to be done ASAP (e.g., a state mandate or court order); and (3) when there is concern by the governing body that a bond would not pass. The meeting adjourned following various information requests by the members being tabulated by the staff.

March 23, 2006⁶⁹

Following a review of the written summary of their last meeting, Bolyn McClung introduced the idea of using "findings of facts," a tool utilized by the Pineville zoning committee he chaired to glean key points from presentations and to differentiate opinion from fact. A number of the members questioned the need for such a process, which was viewed by them as unnecessarily time-consuming. Eventually, fifteen members voted in favor of trying the process out for a week or two.

Based on the previous input from the Committee members, a proposed meeting schedule was presented with four meetings moved from Fridays to Thursdays, starting the meetings at

⁶⁹ Mecklenburg County, *March 23 Meeting Summary*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/March+23+Results.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

noon, and shortening the length of meetings to three hours. Following a brief discussion, the schedule was approved unanimously.

At this point, the previously tabled motion from March 10 regarding proxy voting and attendance requirements to participate was revisited. Although advocated strongly by John Reid, eventually he revised his motion to allow a written proxy for any member who could not attend the final meeting, regardless of attendance history. The committee then approved the motion unanimously.

A panel of experts on growth and student projections comprised of Jeff Michaels, Director of the UNCC Urban Institute; Debra Campbell, Planning Director of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission; Mike Raible, CMS Planning; and Susan Agruso, CMS Assistant Superintendent for Planning, Assessment and Technical Support was then convened. These panelists described how their respective organizations project population trends in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg area and how these projections then affect projections by CMS of student enrollment. In response to a question regarding whether the city or the county can control the growth through "smart growth," Committee member Jerry Fox, former Mecklenburg County Manager, stated that if an area is zoned properly, there is no way that the government can control growth. Deborah Campbell also noted that in general, relative differences between high, medium and low-income areas are expected to remain roughly the same. Ralph McMillan inquired regarding whether there is a correlation between overcrowding and the academic performance of students. Susan Agruso indicated that reliable data about a correlation does not exist, but she pointed out concerns with safety and

difficulty of school management, resulting in stressful environments, low morale and overall tension in overcrowded schools.

Dr. Agruso also provided 20th day of school year data for CMS:

- 123,789 students for the 2005-06 school year;
- 5,100 new students enrolled in CMS that year (slightly off projections due to the arrival of students displaced by Katrina);
- 4,400 new students expected the next year (2006-07);
- 14,000 students with special needs due to a disability;
- 50 percent Free and Reduced Lunch or FRL students;
- Over 12,000 limited English proficiency (LEP) children.

Dr. Agruso discussed the CMS pre-Kindergarten program, as well as the "Focus Schools" program to deliberately decrease class size based on high-poverty and low academic achievement. Regarding the state of facility utilization at the time, she reported the following information:

- 8 schools were underutilized at the time, i.e., below 80% utilization;
- 22 schools were 106% to 120% overutilized, i.e., overcrowded;
- Hawk Ridge Elementary School, for example, had more mobiles than classroom space;⁷⁰
- 11 additional elementary schools, 3 middle schools and 4 high schools were now needed;
- Roughly 3,300 pre-K students were presently attending public schools, along with 7,000 more students entering Kindergarten each year;
- Facility utilization calculations considered 16 children per class in Focus Schools and 22 children per class in Non-Focus Schools.

In addition to other requests for data by members of the Committee, Lindalyn Kakadelis inquired about year-round schools and how that model could affect local schools. Dr.

Agruso responded that CMS could serve 25 percent to 30 percent more children with year-

⁷⁰ This was the case at Lake Wylie Elementary School during the 2005-2006 school year as well, with roughly 32 usable classrooms inside the building and 40 mobile classrooms outside the building.

round schools, although such a program posed serious social issues, family issues and other implications.

The panel presentation and discussion was followed by a presentation of the Citizens' Task Force on CMS findings by Task Force Co-Chair and former Charlotte mayor Harvey Gantt. Mr. Gantt outlined the task force's findings, noting in particular the CMS capacity crisis as a crucial issue. He reported a number of task force recommendations including strategies for implementing charter schools, contract schools and partnerships with nonprofit agencies, museums, higher education institutions and businesses. He also noted the task force's recommendation to establish decentralized geographical areas around the county to address concerns with bureaucratic inefficiencies associated with centralized management as well as the recommendation to transfer planning for school construction to a new city-county agency that would engage all municipalities within Mecklenburg County.

Following the presentation, Anne Udall updated the committee on plans for school visits, allowing Committee members to visit a range of newly constructed, newly renovated, overcrowded and older schools. The Committee then adjourned until the March 31, 2006 meeting.

March 31, 2006⁷¹

This fourth meeting of the School Building Solutions Committee continued the focus of the previous meeting on gathering information and educating the Committee. In discussing the key findings sheet developed by the subcommittee resulting from Bolyn McClung's

⁷¹ Mecklenburg County, *March 31 Meeting Summary*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/March+31+Results.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

recommendation, Richard McElrath questioned the use of the term, "overcrowded schools" and offered the case of inner-city schools that he considered overcrowded but that had not been designated as such by CMS. Tom Davis also asked whether the school board has the flexibility to change how it spends bond funding. This was a significant issue in relation to the Board of Education's refusal in June 2005 to re-prioritize previously approved bonds based on the concern of some of its members that doing so would raise issues of voter trust.

Another panel presentation and discussion followed regarding "How We Got to the 2005 Bond Referendum." The panelists included Guy Chamberlain, CMS; Scott McCully, CMS; the author in his role as chairman of the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee; and Harry Jones, Mecklenburg County Manager. Mr. Chamberlain described the overall process by which CMS develops its Capital Needs Assessment and Capital Improvement Plan and how this was translated into the 2005 bond referendum. In response to questions about potential tax breaks for owners of land desired by CMS, Mr. Chamberlain replied that CMS approaches developers about donating school sites when it knows a development is being planned or is in progress. In 2005, the bond package was sized so that in two years CMS could return and request another bond. A consequence of the failed 2005 bonds is that inflation will make future construction more expensive. For example, delays due to the failed bond have led to \$30 million in expenses.

Scott McCully then discussed elements of the student assignment plan as they impact the need for facility construction and renovation. Mr. McCully replied in response to a question regarding unitary status that the term means that "the system is acting as one in serving all children" and that it is not a dual or plural system. He also noted that interest in magnet

programs had remained strong as evidenced by the 18,000 students that still apply each year. The author then, acting in his role as chairman of the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee, made a presentation regarding the role of that committee in the Mecklenburg County capital budget review process and how it was involved in the review of the 2005 CMS bond request, noting that the School Building Solutions Committee was, in effect, an ad hoc version of that committee.

Harry Jones then continued the discussion of this process, picking up from the point at which he as the County Manager receives the recommendations of the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee in considering, with the County's finance staff, matters such as debt affordability, other considerations and ways to reduce the cost if warranted. He also noted that while the committee plays an advisory role, final decisions by the County Commission are subject to the political process.

Following this panel, a second panel on construction methods was convened, including Mr. Chamberlain; the author;⁷² Bill Powell, Forsyth County Planning and Development; and Penn Cassells, President of Edison Foard, Inc., a general contracting firm. Mr. Chamberlain reviewed school construction guidelines for the State of North Carolina's Department of Public Instruction and compared these standards to CMS standards. He also noted individual municipalities can add "special zone conditions," which can increase costs. For example, the Town of Matthews required CMS to place mobiles only behind the school building and required "special use permits" to extend mobiles beyond the building.

⁷² As noted in the Prologue, the author is a degreed mechanical engineer, licensed in the States of North Carolina and South Carolina and employed in the electrical generation industry. At this writing, he has roughly 25 years of experience in the design, construction, operations and maintenance of electrical generating facilities.

Likewise, the Town of Huntersville requires low-impact storm water measures and, to comply, CMS had to build several gardens within the North Mecklenburg High School parking lot to absorb run-off.

Bill Powell of Forsyth County Planning and Development provided a comparison of the processes, policies and challenges in Forsyth County. Penn Cassells of Edison Foard then made a number of suggestions and recommendations regarding process enhancements that would save on costs of doing business with CMS, including recommendations to consider two-story classroom wings rather than flat elementary schools in order to gain efficiencies in land use; construction of steel-frame schools; building prototype schools; pre-qualifying bidders; and other measures. Notably, Mr. Cassells disagreed with the CMS Task Force recommendation to transfer construction authority to a city/county agency. In response to a question about savings due to standardization, Mr. Cassells indicated that standardization could save 5 to 10 percent of construction costs. Although economical, Mr. Cassells recommended against so-called "big-box conversions."

April 7, 2006⁷³

The April 7 meeting began with another panel discussion featuring Steven Taynton, the Chief of School Planning for the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, and Ken Templeton, the Headmaster of Union Academy, a charter school located in Union County (adjoining Mecklenburg County to the south). Mr. Taynton provided an overview on charter schools and school construction in North Carolina, noting that while certain non-negotiable items such as compliance with building codes, sanitation rules, elevator

⁷³ Mecklenburg County, *April 7 Meeting Summary* (accessed September 16, 2007), <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/April+7+Results.htm>.

requirements, the Department of Public Instruction provides only guidelines. Local boards have a great deal of latitude in following the state guidelines. Since they receive only operational funding from the state and no capital funding for infrastructure from the county, charter schools must be creative in providing adequate facilities. He also highlighted a point often raised by Lindalyn Kakadelis that pre-K programs often face issues with different building codes than those associated with facilities for other grade levels, a concern as CMS pushes forward with pre-K program expansions. He also confirmed a point made by CMS personnel regarding increases in the cost of materials driving more expensive facilities. In 2004, due to the impact of Chinese construction on the price of steel, prices in the United States jumped by 20% and then by 20% again in 2005. Also of note, in response to questions from Committee members, Mr. Taynton indicated that CMS tends to build standard schools and does not seem to add extravagant elements. He confirmed that schools were built cheaply during the post-war, baby boom era, resulting in costlier renovations to these schools today. Regarding conversion of big-box facilities, Mr. Taynton made three observations about conversions: (1) they offer quicker turnaround than new construction; (2) however, they can be more costly more than new construction; and (3) they are not always well-suited to all the needs of a school.

Mr. Templeton then shared the experiences of Union Academy charter school. The school began with 300 students (K-4) in an old, leased school building but had expanded to K-9 with two campuses, with the desire to become a K-12 school. Union Academy spent between \$2 million and \$2.5 million for its new campus, a facility sized at 40,000 square feet and sited on 52 acres. The facility is a two-story building rather than one-story. While they did not see a significant difference in cost, they were able to utilize their land more

efficiently. Another significant difference was in the use of drywall rather than block walls.

A foundation was formed to provide the capital for construction, with the foundation owning the property and leasing it back to the school.⁷⁴ Compared to Union Academy costs per square foot of \$50, it is not unheard of for costs of \$140 per square foot to be seen in comparable schools.

Following the panel presentation and discussion, Governor Martin introduced a survey conducted by MarketWise regarding public perceptions of CMS and issues surrounding the 2005 bond referendum defeat. Jean Ann Schmidt from MarketWise presented the results of this Mecklenburg County School Bonds Perceptions. Having reviewed the background, objectives and methodology of the survey, she shared the survey results:⁷⁵

- While both sides of the issue recognized overcrowding as a serious issue (in fact, the biggest concern among those who favored the bonds), those who oppose the bonds were even more concerned about the lack of accountability of the Board of Education and CMS administration/leadership; high property taxes; mismanagement of previous bond spending and operational funds by the Board of Education; and the lack of discipline in schools.
- A majority of respondents would vote in favor of the bonds on a future referendum if a number of changes were made such as dividing CMS into smaller districts and placing equal emphasis on new school construction and renovating old schools.

⁷⁴ Again, charter schools receive only operational funds based on the number of students in attendance, so they must pay for leases or debt service and still educate their students from the same source of money.

⁷⁵ Jean Ann Schmidt, *Mecklenburg County School Bonds Perceptions, February-March 2006* (MarketWise), PowerPoint presentation.

Ms. Schmidt indicated that the key would be identifying changes that opposition voters will favor without alienating those who already support the bonds. Among these were decreasing the dependence on bonds by developing alternative revenue sources; restructuring the largest high schools into smaller high schools; and transferring the responsibility for school construction from the Board of Education to a city-county agency with expertise in city planning. However, giving taxing authority to the Board of Education had essentially no support on either side despite a desire to develop alternate revenue streams. Finally, the survey results indicated that it would be necessary to "get out the vote" in the next bond referendum.⁷⁶

As this meeting drew to a close, Governor Martin gave the Committee members a "homework assignment" to study these survey results and to be prepared to discuss and debate them at the next meeting. Dr. Udall then provided information to the members regarding school visits, reiterating that members were expected to visit a variety of up to five schools.

April 21, 2006⁷⁷

The next meeting was held at Hopewell High School in suburban Huntersville rather than the Government Center. The members would be divided into six small groups consisting of

⁷⁶ Cf. Mecklenburg County Board of Elections, *Mecklenburg County, NC Voter Registration Demographic Information (Active & Inactive Voters)*, <http://meckboe.org/VoterDemoAllReturn.aspx?type=precinct> (accessed September 21, 2007). With registered Mecklenburg County Democratic voters representing roughly 43% of the electorate as compared with 33% Republican voters and 24% unaffiliated voters, encouraging high voter turnout is not advantageous to Republican candidates in countywide elections. As such, this approach tends not to receive much support from the Mecklenburg GOP. For further confirmation, see Ann Doss Helms, "School Bond Chances Are Slim - Martin's Group Weighs Calling for Vote; They See Difficult Path to Victory," *The Charlotte Observer*, May 12, 2006.

⁷⁷ Mecklenburg County, *April 21 Meeting Summary*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/April+21+Results.htm> (accessed September 16 2007).

people with divergent views, the purpose of the small group discussion being to explore ideas and gauge areas of agreement and disagreement. Six facilitators would guide the discussions, and staff and others would observe. Dr. Udall recommended that the group see a balance of "advocacy" and "inquiry."

Prior to the small group discussions Governor Martin and Dr. Udall introduced a plan for public participation. The public meeting format would consist of interactive presentations and small group discussion, not an open-microphone format. Rev. Ricky Woods expressed concern that certain segments of the community would feel left out of the process, noting that there are perceptions that these conversations generally go to the same players and that some groups feel excluded whether unintentional or not. Following the small group discussion, which lasted approximately an hour and a half, the facilitators reported on the discussions within the groups they had supported. The discussions centered around four questions:

1. *Is there a need to build new schools?*

A significant majority agreed that there was a need to build new schools but that there remained a number of issues to resolve regarding cost, style and the efficient capacity of schools.

2. *Is there a need to expand existing schools?*

There were mixed responses within and across the groups. Some said that if this meant increasing the use of mobile classrooms, or expanding facilities beyond their core capacity, they would not support such efforts. Furthermore, dividing large high

school facilities into smaller high schools that remain, nonetheless in the same facility was not necessarily a solutions to the problems of overcrowding.

3. *Is there a need to renovate existing schools?*

Responses among the members reflected uncertainty based on the information at hand. If by "renovation" what was meant was that renovations raised schools to a standard on par with the newest schools, then many were in support of this position, taking into consideration quality of life issues as well as health and safety concerns. Others felt that focusing on the 21 schools that the CMS Equity Committee had deemed below par represented a workable strategy with regard to renovation priorities.

4. *In the short-term, what is the financing preference among current options?*

Opinions were divided regarding the use of COPs versus GO bonds. Many expressed the concern that, based on the survey results, not enough time would have passed by November 2006 to build the public trust needed to pass bonds. However, others felt that the community needed to own the issue. COPs, in essence, shut the public out of the decision-making process. A good deal of the discussion centered around this particular issue once the Committee had gathered together from the small groups.

The meeting minutes indicate that Governor Martin commended the members for keeping the tone of their discussions passionate, but respectful. However, the story from *The Charlotte Observer* the next day suggested otherwise:

"Obviously we have some more talking to do," former N.C. Gov. Jim Martin, who heads the committee, said after the meeting. "I was not expecting we would solve all the problems today. We've got (the committee) till June to do that."

The meeting also highlighted divisions seen in the community and on the school board.

Rhonda Lennon, a former school board candidate from north Mecklenburg who supported the November bond referendum, suggested COPs might now make more sense. Part of the reason, she said, is new CMS Superintendent Peter Gorman shouldn't have to make a difficult pitch for bonds as soon as he starts work.

Moments later, westside resident James McCoy asked why the committee was meeting, if not to craft a bond package that would win approval. People who support COPs - which he said afterward could benefit some parts of the county more than others - are "being a little selfish."

"I take exception to that," Lennon said.

Martin intervened, preventing further disagreement. Afterward, Lennon was still steamed.

Martin told McCoy after the meeting there's a reason members of Congress refer to each other as their "distinguished colleague."

"When you (label people)," Martin told him, "people are going to fight back. When you fight back, we are going to rupture."

McCoy said he would heed that advice.⁷⁸

April 28, 2006⁷⁹

Governor Martin convened the meeting and introduced two citizens, Mary Isaacs, representing the Architects for Education Group of the AIA Charlotte Chapter, who spoke about the importance of education and of applying good design principles in schools; and Diane Cato, a mother of young children, who spoke about overcrowded schools and urged committee members to recommend COPs to fund new schools immediately. Likewise, the

⁷⁸ Peter Smolowitz, "Add Schools Without Asking? - Committee Considers Funding That Wouldn't Require Referendum," *The Charlotte Observer*, April 22, 2006.

⁷⁹ Mecklenburg County, *April 28 Meeting Summary*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/April+28+Results.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

Committee had received e-mails from several citizens supporting COPs. The Committee members then shared their observations and impressions from school visits to Cochrane Middle School; Idlewild Elementary School; Sedgefield Middle School; Long Creek Elementary School; Alexander Graham Middle School; J. M. Alexander Middle School; Harding High School; North Mecklenburg High School; Steele Creek Elementary School; Mountain Island Elementary School; and Hawk Ridge Elementary School. These schools represented a broad range of facilities issues for CMS, from overcrowding to needed renovations or in some cases, both. From these visits, the Committee members came away impressed by the challenges at-hand and the need to generate bold, out-of-the-box solutions.

After a brief follow-up discussion with Guy Chamberlain regarding questions from the Committee members, Harry Jones and Harry Weatherly presented additional information to clarify lingering questions among Committee members regarding capital financing. The ensuing group discussion noted that a significant degree of interracial distrust was stirred by the last bond vote. Also of significance was the emergence of a growing consensus that, based on the results of the MarketWise survey, the Committee would need to consider a combination of financial instruments that would send the message that the community was going forward differently than in the past.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ Following the meeting, *The Observer* reported a sea change in the Committee regarding support for funding mechanisms. Cf. Ann Doss Helms, "School Bond Referendum Unlikely This Year - Panel Looking at Options to Give New Leader More Time to Adjust to CMS," *The Charlotte Observer*, April 29, 2006.

May 5, 2006⁸¹

At the beginning of this meeting, Governor Martin invoked Section XII of Thomas

Jefferson's *A Manual of Parliamentary Practice*⁸² regarding "Committees of the Whole" in order to facilitate the discussion of the Committee's Guiding Principles. In so doing, Governor Martin temporarily set aside his prerogative as Committee Chair so that he might be able to speak freely and candidly as often as he pleased, asking Anne Udall to chair the "Committee of the Whole."

The Committee then determined its level of agreement on a set of guiding principles. Dr. Udall explained the discussion process by describing a set of colored cards in front of each Committee member. Each guiding principle would be enumerated one at a time after which Udall would ask each committee member to hold up a card signifying their level of agreement with the guiding principle. A green card represented complete and favorable agreement with the principle. A yellow card represented willingness to support the principle despite not having complete and favorable agreement with the principle. A red card represented a desire to have clarification of the principle or to express a question, concern, or clarifying point in reference to the principle.

Malachi Greene expressed his concern regarding points where he might be able to support a principle personally, but that he could not support it publicly. Ed Goode responded that Committee members are not elected officials, raising the issue of whether committee

⁸¹ Mecklenburg County, *May 5 Meeting Summary*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/May+5+Results.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

⁸² Thomas Jefferson, *A Manual of Parliamentary Practice for the Use of the Senate of the United States* in The Constitution Society, <http://www.constitution.org/tj/tj-mpp.htm> (accessed September 22, 2007).

members should be concerned about supporting something personally and simultaneously not supporting it publicly. Mr. Greene responded that Committee members would have to "sell" their recommendations, regardless of their non-elected status. Mr. Goode, in turn, responded that he viewed this committee as a non-political avenue to try and build consensus, and that personal support and public support should be the same thing.

At this point, Governor Martin interjected that Mr. Greene reserved the right to view his Committee membership status as he sees fit and act accordingly and clarified that the guiding principles are his estimation for where he thinks the committee is in terms of general agreement on development of the committee's recommendations. As such, there was no need to get hung up on the principles themselves, and that day's discussion would focus on whether to recommend a school financing package, not on the specifics of how it should do so, which would be discussed at a later meeting. These guiding principles did not bind the Committee members, but represented a first draft, and if the Committee members felt that his perception was wrong, then they reserved the right to change them.

Each of the guiding principles was then displayed on a projection screen with the green-yellow-red card system of voting being used to guide discussion. The draft principles were as follows:

1. *Our first set of recommendations must focus on the critical short-term needs of CMS; short-term would be defined as one-year.*

Mr. McClung, Mr. McElrath and Ms. Kakadelis displayed red cards. Ms. Kakadelis expressed concern about limiting guiding principles to short-term CMS needs, to which Dr. Udall noted that the eleventh principle might address that concern. Mr.

McClung questioned the use of the adjective 'critical,' stating that he did not see CMS short-term needs as necessarily critical. Mr. McElrath expressed concern about what needs the committee perceived as critical and whether the committee should decide that those needs should be solved in the short-term.

Dr. Udall proposed another vote with the word "facility" added, but Mr. McElrath and Mr. McClung again displayed red cards. Mr. Greene also commented regarding disquiet in the black and inner-city communities for simply addressing facility needs, noting that facility needs are tangled up with other needs, and that the committee cannot divorce from those other entangled issues. For the sake of time and based on an overwhelming majority, Dr. Udall added the word "facility" in front of the word "needs" and moved the discussion on. Guiding Principle #1 was revised to read, "Our first set of recommendations must focus on the critical short-term facility needs of CMS; short-term would be defined as one-year." Messrs. Greene and McElrath continued to display red cards.

2. *There is a clear and immediate need for construction of new schools to relieve the overload on facilities, and to provide schools of more manageable size.*

Mr. McElrath displayed his red card, questioning the purpose of building schools when CMS is cited in the top 100 school districts in the nation in terms of needing to address educational and safety needs. Jim Kirchner responded that the need for more seats is a known fact previously agreed upon by all Committee members, leading to the belief that building schools is imperative, to which Mr. McElrath responded that such an option could be a permanent solution to a problem that may

not permanently exist. When Ray Owens proposed adding the language "both within the City of Charlotte and outlying areas," Ms. Lennon and Messrs. Greene, Morgan, Boylan, and McCoy displayed their red cards. The final language for Guiding Principle #2 was revised to read, "There is a clear and immediate need for construction of new schools to relieve the overload on facilities, and to provide schools of more manageable size, throughout the entire county." Messrs. McElrath and McMillan were the only red cards for the final language.

3. *There is a clear and immediate need for renovation of older schools that are still needed for continued service, both within the inner city of Charlotte and in the outlying suburban areas.*

Ms. Lennon and Mr. Davis displayed red cards, with Ms. Lennon suggesting replacing "both within the City of Charlotte and outlying areas" with "throughout the entire county" because the middle ring schools are not being recognized in this principle. Mr. Boylan also objected to the language of "outlying suburban areas" and suggested more unifying language. Guiding Principle #3 was revised to read, "There is a clear and immediate need for renovation of older schools that are still needed for continued service, throughout the entire county." There were no red cards.

4. *Construction and renovation must occur immediately, regardless of the method of funding.*

Rev. Woods, Mr. McClung and Ms. Kakadelis displayed red cards for this principle, with Ms. Kakadelis proposing to eliminate any language after "immediately." In her view, the method of funding was focused on two options at that point, and the Committee could not put off deciding between these two methods any longer. Dr. Udall asked for a show of cards for this proposal, and Mr. McCoy, Mr. McClung and

Mr. Greene displayed red cards. Mr. McClung stated there was no difference between "immediate" and "critical" and suggested removing "immediately." Mr. Greene expressed his support for this change. Mr. McCoy essentially agreed with the wording of the principle, but added that funding should be done with the knowledge of the citizenry involved. Thus, he recommended that funding should be with GO bonds because COPs represent a lack of involvement. Ms. Lennon suggested eliminating this principle because it seemed redundant, with Mr. Davis commenting that the principle created the illusion that construction and renovation were going to happen in short order. Guiding Principle #4 was revised to read, "Construction and renovation must happen pretty darn quickly," with Ms. Kakadelis, Mr. McClung and Rev. Woods holding red cards.

5. *The purchase of land while it is still relatively available at a lower price is a long-term need that requires short-term action.*

Tim Morgan displayed his red card regarding this principle, saying that there is a limited amount of money for short-term needs, and they should be spent on construction and renovations, including land purchases in a long-term plan instead. However, there were no revisions to Guiding Principle #5 when the discussion was finished.

6. *Priorities for all decisions on construction and renovation are the health and safety of children and efficient management of resources.*

Ms. Lennon, Mr. McClung and Rev. Woods displayed red cards with Rev. Woods seeking clarification of the principle. Dr. Udall responded that this principle is essentially clarifying why construction and renovation are necessary, to which Rev.

Woods suggested alternate, stronger language than "the health and safety of children," possibly replacing that language with "to ensure baseline standards are met." Mr. McCoy considered the principle too broad, and Mr. McClung went so far as to suggest eliminating it. Dr. Murrey suggested the addition of "create an effective learning environment," and thus Guiding Principle #6 was revised to read, "Priorities for all decisions on construction and renovation should include the health and safety of children, an effective learning environment, and efficient management of resources." This resulted in no red cards being displayed.

7. *COPs and General Obligation Bonds both provide available funding options for renovations and new construction.*

Messrs. Greene, Davis, McElrath and McCoy and Ms. Kakadelis displayed red cards, with Mr. McCoy reiterating that COPs do not involve the general public and Mr. McMillan suggesting that this principle inform the public about the nature of COPs. He observed that the public should be informed that COPS are more expensive and suggested adding language to speak to that fact. However, Ms. Lennon noted that COPs are not necessarily more expensive since they were fairly close to the cost of GO bond funding at the time.

This led Mr. Owens to question the purpose of the principles, noting that if the list were publicized tomorrow, then every word would count. However, there would be more flexibility if the list were only used internally. Dr. Udall clarified that most of the Committee members were in overwhelming support of the principles at that point and that discussion of the principles should not be confused with support for

them. Rev. Woods commented that COPs and GO bonds were not the only funding options, and that this principle implied that. Guiding Principle # 7 was revised to read, "General Obligation Bonds and COPs are funding options for renovations and new construction." Only Mr. McMillan displayed his red card for this wording.

8. *Public approval of school bond referenda is the most desirable approach for capital funding of school construction and renovation.*

Mr. Davis, Mr. Morgan, Ms. Lennon, Ms. Kakadelis and Mr. Kirchner displayed red cards in response to this principle. Ms. Lennon stated that the public has distrust about bonds for schools, and Mr. Kirchner, Mr. Morgan and Ms. Kakadelis agreed, with Mr. Goode changing his card choice to red based on Ms. Lennon's observation. However, in response, Mr. McClung stated that the committee was apparently afraid of the voters, but not afraid to spend their money, which was wrong. Governor Martin cautioned Mr. McClung not to attribute motives to other committee members.

Mr. Ross expressed confusion about COPs and GO bonds, along with the view that elected officials, whether the Board of Education or the County Commission, would have control over the spending of COPs, and the County Commission would have to approve the manner in which funds for either method are spent, so in either scenario the voters are represented. Harry Jones explained that the County Commission must authorize the use of COPs as a funding mechanism in a public session with funding allocated in a project-specific manner. There were no revisions

to Guiding Principle #8, but Mr. Davis, Ms. Kakadelis, Mr. Kirchner, Ms. Lennon, Mr. McClung and Mr. Morgan continued to display their red cards.

9. *The Board of Education must address key concerns by the public if future bond referendums are to be successful. The committee recommends that in order to gain public confidence the School Board must take specific actions in the area of decentralization and efficient management of resources.*

Messrs. Greene, Woods, McClung, Boylan, and McCoy displayed red cards, with Rev. Woods stating that he was not sold on the idea of decentralization. Mr. Greene responded that he is concerned that the Board of Education was not appropriately managing resources and agreed with Rev. Woods. Mr. Boylan also indicated that he did not like isolating this one point as if decentralization was changed everything would be better. Dr. Udall suggested eliminating the second sentence of the principle due to concern about decentralization, and general agreement was reached. Guiding Principle #9 was thus revised to read, "The Board of Education must address key concerns by the public if future bond referendums are to be successful."

10. *Funds are needed for both construction and renovation and in roughly the same proportions as in the 2005 failed referendum. We will recommend projects that our review has shown to be among the most critical needs.*

At Governor Martin's suggestion and by general agreement, this principle was split into two principles, effectively making the second sentence an additional principle number 11. Dr. Murrey questioned the proportions in the failed referendum, and Governor Martin responded that it was a 2 to 1 proportion. Dr. Murrey then suggested explicitly stating the actual proportion in the principle because that is important information. Davis also suggested eliminating the word "failed." Guiding

Principle #10 was revised to read, "Funds are needed for both construction and renovation and in roughly the same 2:1 proportions as in the 2005 referendum," with Mr. McMillan continuing to display his red card.

11. *We will recommend projects that our review has shown to be among the most critical needs.*

Rev. Woods and Mr. McClung displayed red cards, with Mr. McClung stating his disfavor with the word "critical," and Rev. Woods expressing the belief that this should not be a guiding principle. Ms. Tucker pointed out that it would be logical to recommend specific projects in order to reach a certain number for a bond package. Guiding Principle #11 was revised to read, "We may recommend projects that our review has shown to be among the most critical needs," with Mr. McClung and Rev. Woods holding up red cards.

12. *If our short-term recommendations are accepted, and if there is good progress toward implementation of proposals such as those put forward by the Citizens Task Force for CMS, we would be willing to undertake further studies of longer term solutions, including building standards and materials, shared facilities for major athletic events and practice facilities, more Charter Schools, consolidation of schools with low enrollment, year-round schedules, alternative sources of revenue, and the like.*

Messrs. Woods, McCoy, McElrath, McMillan and Davis displayed red cards. Mr. McCoy and Rev. Woods both expressed concern about language referring to the Citizens Task Force for CMS. Mr. McMillan proposed adding language about facilitating cheaper construction of schools because it is already implied, while Mr. McElrath not only agreeing with Mr. McCoy and Rev. Woods, but indicating he would like to add recommendations by the Committee on Equity in Schools explicitly to that list. Mr. Kirchner argued that the committee cannot replace one schools committee for another in this principle. The committee was in general

agreement with eliminating "and if there is good progress toward implementation of proposals such as those put forward by the Citizens Task Force for CMS," and so Guiding Principle #12 was revised to read, "If our short-term recommendations are accepted, we would be willing to undertake further studies of longer term solutions, including building standards and materials, shared facilities for major athletic events and practice facilities, more Charter Schools, consolidation of schools with low enrollment, year-round schedules, alternative sources of revenue, and the like," with Mr. McMillan, Mr. McElrath, Mr. Morgan and Rev. Woods holding up red cards.

The next meeting would address the question of COPs vs. General Obligation Bonds as methods of financing schools construction and renovation.

May 11, 2006⁸³

The meeting began with another opportunity for public participation. Katherine Horne, a member of the American Institute of Architects, commented on her visit to Union Academy with Committee members and on AIA's research. She noted that the figure of \$50 per square foot for the Academy's construction did not include telecommunication wiring, security system, kitchen equipment, signage or site preparation, some of which were provided as gifts in kind or discounted to the school. If a comparison was to be made of the costs of Union Academy and a CMS school built in the same year, it should be an apples-to-apples comparison. AIA representatives had deducted pertinent costs from CMS' costs of \$98/square foot and were left with \$55.01. Ms. Horne confirmed the dramatic escalation of construction costs in recent years and affirmed the need to consider life cycle costs when

⁸³ Mecklenburg County, *May 11 Meeting Summary*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/May+11+Results.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

constructing a school that will be used for 40 or 50 years. In reiterating that studies report a correlation between a building's quality and students' education, she concluded by asking whether "cheaper [buildings were] the right decision for our students, teachers and education community." Committee members then posed questions to Ms. Horne. For instance, Mr. Erwin inquired about the percentage of the architect fee, which was stated to be roughly 6 to 8 percent for a new school, more for renovation, less for design-build and even less for prototype construction. Mr. Erwin noted that the rate is higher than in private-sector development.

Messrs. McClung and Boylan then reported on the visit to Union Academy. School staff shared a report of budgeted versus actual building expenses. They noted that the charter schools revealed no "secrets" but rather demonstrated how "choices" and the will to do things differently can ultimately make the difference (e.g., drywall vs. block walls). Mr. Erwin encouraged members to visit Sugar Creek Charter School as an example of a big-box renovation built for \$53 per square foot.

Next, the members reviewed the process used the previous week to develop the Committee's guiding principles and its outcome. Dr. Udall then led the group through a review of each principle with members again displaying colored cards to indicate their support, concerns or objections.

When this was finished, Dr. Udall updated the Committee on plans for public participation and reminded Committee members that they would be expected to attend and listen during

the meetings. Members indicate their plans to attend particular meetings, and a discussion regarding acceptable funding means for short-term facility needs concluded the meeting.

May 19, 2006⁸⁴

Governor Martin began a review of the information garnered in the public forums by noting that public forums offer different information from that which is collected by surveys, emphasizing the importance of hearing directly from the public, where the intensity lies. Mr. Boylan questioned how get "a real temperature check" based on the comments of only a few people, to which Governor Martin suggested that members assess the *merit* of what was said during the forums and consider the *intensity* people must feel about an issue to attend a forum. Mr. McClung also noted that forum participants did not question the guiding principles.

Governor Martin suggested using the colored cards to ratify the guiding principles, proposing to drop those principles that retain at least five red cards after that day's vote. Based on some objections, Governor Martin agreed to set aside that proposal and to move on if a principle had less than five red-card votes. The outcome, with the ratified language, was as described below:

1. *Our first set of recommendations must focus on the critical short-term facility needs to support the educational mission of CMS; short-term would be defined as being initiated within one-year.*

After extended discussion, the group unanimously ratified the amended version.

⁸⁴ Anne Udall, e-mail with attached SBSC Minutes for May 19, May 25 and June 15, 2006 to Michael L. Murdock, September 21, 2007.

2. *There is a clear and immediate need for construction of new schools to relieve the overload on facilities throughout the entire county.*

After addressing concerns with the phrase "manageable size," the group unanimously ratified the amended version.

3. *There is a clear and immediate need for renovation of older schools that are still needed for continued service throughout the entire county.*

Following some discussion, the group unanimously ratified the amended version.

4. *Construction and renovation must happen quickly.*
5. *The acquisition of land at a reasonable cost is an ongoing need.*

The Committee was unanimous on ratifying this principle as is.

6. *Priorities for all decisions on construction and renovation should include the health and safety of children, an effective learning environment, and efficient management of resources.*
7. *Public approval of school bond referenda is a desirable long-term approach for capital funding of school construction and renovation.*

After group discussion, a modified version of the principle was ratified.

8. *General Obligation Bonds and COPs are among the available funding options for renovations and new construction.*

Mary Wilson proposed adding "pay as you go" as another option. Considerable discussion followed, and ultimately the group ratified a modified version, agreeing, however, that more information was needed on the "pay as you go" option.

9. *The Board of Education must address key concerns by the public if future bond referenda are to be successful.*

10. *Funds are needed for both construction and renovation and in roughly the same 2:1 proportions as in the 2005 referendum.*

Teresa Williams questioned the proportions and the Committee's readiness to decide this matter, with several others concurring. Mr. Fox expressed his belief that basing the recommendation on need in Principle #10 and on a 2:1 ratio in Principle #11 was contradictory. The Committee voted instead to table the matter until a later date.

11. *We may recommend projects that our review has shown to be among the most critical needs.*

12. *If our short-term recommendations are accepted, we would be willing to undertake further studies of longer-term solutions.*

Chip Boorman stated that the principle was reaching beyond the Committee's purview and suggested reducing the "laundry list" in the original version. Others concurred, and after several attempts to amend the principle, the group finally ratified a modified version.

Governor Martin acknowledged the Committee's accomplishment in approving the principles with strong consensus in most cases and then polled the members about their views on short-term financing options with no one on the Committee objecting. Dr. Udall then introduced seven questions for consideration with Governor Martin reiterating that straw votes on short-term recommendations were nonbinding and that all options would be discussed at the next meeting. The results of the straw vote were as follows:

STRAW VOTE QUESTIONS	GREEN	YELLOW	RED
Q-1: At the present time, how many of you would support public referendum bonds as a financing option?	17	5	3
Q-2: At the present time, how many of you would support issued certificates as financing option?	15	5	4
Q-3: At the present time, how many of you would support using a combination of GO bonds and issued certificates as financing option.	19	3	2
<i>Only one vote permitted for the following four questions.</i>			
Q-4: I have no preference; I am comfortable with any of these options.	2 votes		
Q-5: My first preference is for public referendum bonds	4 votes		
Q-6: My first preference is for certificates of participation.	7 votes		
Q-7: My first preference is a combination of both a referendum and certificates of participation.	12 votes		

Governor Martin noted a plurality of support for COPs or a combination of GO bonds and COPs. Following this straw vote, Guy Chamberlain reviewed a list of critical short-term and near-term needs of CMS; school facility status by district; and start and completion dates of projects. Mr. Chamberlain reported that CMS was on track to spend approximately \$149 million in 2006. He also noted that while the 2:1 ratio was relevant at that time, the number of renovation projects declines and growth increases every year. As a result, the proportion changes. He also reported that CMS' 10-year plan was actually projected to take 15 years to implement because the actual plan would require \$220M each year.

May 25, 2006⁸⁵

The Committee met that week at Community House Middle School. First, the Committee reviewed its schedule over the coming month. Beginning June 5, the Committee would take its recommendations to the public for additional input in an interactive public forum

⁸⁵ Ibid.

designed to engage participants beyond just advocating for one viewpoint or plan. Also, a meeting with the Board of Education was slated for June 27.

Harry Weatherly then reviewed information regarding the County's debt management guidelines. He emphasized that the County must look at the debt of all towns in the county, not just Charlotte. He also noted that over the past few years 57% of county debt has been for schools. A number of Committee members asked questions and sought additional information for comparison with other communities as well as information regarding other County projects outside of CMS.

The Committee then moved on to review a draft preliminary short-term option based on the list provided by Guy Chamberlain the week before, which resulted a number of questions regarding the list and the selection of projects it included. Lynn Schmidt, in asking whether any school bond funds had been diverted to other uses, put the matter of bond reprioritization on the table. To this, Mr. Chamberlain responded that no funds had been diverted and that in total, CMS has delivered everything it said it would deliver. He noted that in a few instances some adjustments were made if a projected need was found to be unwarranted.

Mr. Davis likewise raised a difficult issue by questioning the rationale for creating a new military magnet program at the Marie G. Davis Middle School, the *bête noire* of suburban voters, when funds are needed at Cochrane. Mr. Greene asserted in response that the investment at Marie G. Davis was promised to its school community and the public and

cautioned that if the Committee recommended that CMS break that promise, it would exacerbate the issue of distrust, particularly among black voters.

Bernard Johnson expressed discomfort with how the process was unfolding and questioned whether it aligned to the committee's guiding principles. In particular, he asked whether work focused on land and design is a "critical need." Mr. McClung asked whether the short-term critical projects could be assured of starting in calendar year 2006, noting the challenge of balancing public perceptions and expectations with reality. Mr. Chamberlain stated that the projects could start in some means in 2006, although that did not necessarily mean construction equipment on the site. Mr. Boorman highlighted the gap in the amount requested in the failed 2005 bond package and the initial Committee proposal. He questioned the increase in new school spending (up \$100 million) and, conversely, a drop in spending on renovations (down \$100 million). He expressed concern for credibility and support when the public saw an imbalance creating the perception that the Committee was sacrificing renovation projects for new schools. Ms. Kakadelis voiced concern that there was no real change in the previous bond package and the initial proposal. Ms. Wilson stated that if Committee members were going to be advocates, then they would need to have a full understanding of the changes and CMS' rationale. Mr. Davis also emphasized the need to look at the categories, such as academic-related renovation versus athletic tracks. Dr. Murrey noted that seven projects seemed to have been culled from the 2005 package and mirroring Ms. Wilson's concern, stated that if the Committee were to propose a shift from a 2:1 new school/renovation ratio to a 4:1 ratio, members would need to be prepared to explain it and defend it. While Mike Raible of CMS offered explanations about why changes were made, Dr. Murrey stated, "It looks like a political statement." Mr. Greene reiterated the

common theme of a need for a more in-depth explanation about which projects were selected or rejected. Yet, Mr. Edwards noted that those districts that needed schools the most voted often against the referendum and reminded the Committee that seemingly reasoned explanations to the public might not suffice.

Governor Martin and Dr. Udall then asked the Committee to break up into small groups to discuss three questions:

- What do you like about the draft package?
- What would you like to change?
- What additional information would help you in making this decision (use constraint)?

Returning subsequently to the larger group, the members then shared the outcome of the discussions. Regarding what they liked about the draft package, members reported that they liked that it addresses growth; that there was good linkage to address renovations; that it illustrated the different needs and addressed critical renovation needs; that the request set up an incremental plan for requesting COPs and then GO bonds next; and finally, that the list represented schools the Committee had visited. With regard to what the Committee would like to see changed, members pointed to too much focus on growth, reflecting a question of credibility regarding renovations versus new schools on the list; a lack of clarity regarding what was meant by "initiating" a project, i.e., putting kids in seats, breaking ground or moving dirt; and a lack of clarity regarding the criteria by which projects were chosen. Finally, regarding what additional information would help the Committee members in making their decision, Committee members reported that they needed to know what projects were dropped from the 2005 list and why; likewise, they needed to know what was

added to the list that was not on the 2005 list; and last, certain issues needed to be discussed across the racial and economic divide.

As the meeting drew to a close, Governor Martin indicated that by the next meeting the members should be prepared to move forward with some decisions. He noted that the first item of order would need to be decisions about the total amounts for COPs and for bonds and which projects would be part of which package.

June 2, 2006⁸⁶

After Governor Martin opened the meeting with various administrative matters, Dr. Udall reviewed the packets of additional data requested by the Committee. Guy Chamberlain then introduced three new scenarios as frameworks for capital needs involving some mixtures of COPs and bonds focusing on different election cycles. The first scenario considered a COPs issuance totaling \$36.6 million for preconstruction, design, and land acquisition and a GO bond referendum totaling \$397,176,000 to be placed on the ballot in November 2006. The second scenario considered issuing \$149,756,000 in COPs. In addition to COPs, the second scenario would include a \$466,267,968 bond package in a May 2007 primary election.⁸⁷ A number of questions were raised by Committee members, leading Governor Martin to suggest that the group defer discussions about public perceptions and community engagement once they had developed a package. The third scenario would include the same projects, but the openings of the Matthews and Mint Hill high schools and Ridge Road middle school would be delayed until 2010. In response to

⁸⁶ Mecklenburg County, *June 2 Meeting Summary*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/June+2+Results.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

⁸⁷ As Committee members would learn later, there was no May 2007 primary election scheduled.

members' questions, Chamberlain reiterated that there is a cost of doing business in Mecklenburg County—"I'm not going to represent a number that I get stuck with and can't build a school with."

Following a break, Governor Martin initiated the debate by presenting a proposed resolution:

Section 1: Certificates of Participation (COPs) should be approved by Mecklenburg County in the amount of \$150,000,000.

Subsection 1(a): This issuance of COPs should be done as soon as practicable before the end of this calendar year, with proceeds to be spent according to a schedule provided by the County Finance Officer.

Subsection 1(b): This would include funding for those projects identified in Section 3, as amended.

Section 2: General Obligation Bonds in the amount of \$280,000,000 should be submitted to a public referendum of the voters of Mecklenburg County.

Subsection 2(a): The proposed date for this referendum should be at the time of the General Election in November of 2007.

Subsection 2(b): This would include funding for those projects identified in Section 4, as amended.

Section 3: Projects to be financed by means of COPs are identified on the proposed schedule of "2006 COPs/May 2007 Bond - 2006 COPs" (Exhibit I) submitted by CMS staff on this date, as amended by Committee action.

Section 4: Projects to be financed by General Obligation Bonds are identified on the proposed schedule of "2006 COPs/May 2007 Bond - May 2007 Bond Projects" (Exhibit II) submitted by CMS staff on this date, as amended by Committee action.

Section 5: Supporting and explanatory statements may be added to this Resolution by amendment, or they may be subsequently adopted for recommendation to the elected Boards by separate Resolution(s).

Subsection 5(a): By this means, it is in order for the Committee to clarify its intent and provide further justification, without changing the effect of Sections 1-4.

Subsection 5(b): The Committee may hereby provide any recommendations as to cost-saving measures, revenue sources, etc.

Subsection 5(c): The Committee may hereby add provisions addressing the severability of these Sections.

Section 6: As a General Rule (I) of Procedure, when action on amendments to this Resolution has been completed during its first reading for amendment, it will be in order for the Committee to schedule a date on which it will be read a second time for amendment, which shall then begin with Section 7, followed by Sections 1 through 6.

Subsection 6(a): Any amendment(s) for consideration during second reading shall be in writing (except by unanimous consent).

Subsection 6(b): When Committee action on this second round of amendments has been completed, it will then be in order for a vote to be taken by roll call for final adoption as the first recommendation of the Committee to be presented to the elected Boards.

Subsection 6(c): After final adoption, as provided in Subsection 6(b), the text of the Resolution will be circulated to all members of the Committee for the signature of each member who wishes to endorse or ratify the Resolution (regardless of how he or she may have voted on any amendments or on final adoption).

Section 7: As a General Rule (II) of Procedure, after general debate, not to exceed one hour (except by unanimous consent), this Resolution shall be read Section-by-Section for amendment.

Subsection 7(a): Amendments shall be considered for each Section in numerical order, such that amendments to Section 1 shall be perfected and that Section closed before proceeding to Section 2, and amendments to Section 2 shall be perfected and that Section closed before proceeding to Section 3, and so forth in sequence.

Subsection 7(b): This Section 7 shall not be open for amendment until this Resolution is considered for its second reading.

Subsection 7(c): After the completion of all amendments to Sections 1 through 6, each Section shall again be open for conforming amendments.⁸⁸

Members posed questions for clarification and asked for definitions. Mr. Greene moved to accept and consider the submitted resolution, and Mr. Erwin seconded the motion. With this, the debate began in earnest. Members discussed the resolution at length, focusing particularly on Section 1, which addressed the amount of the COPs recommendation. Many members posed clarifying questions. Members also advocated for particular recommendations in the resolution and introduced additional issues and proposals.

Messrs. Morgan, McClung and Erwin then reported on their tour of the Sugar Creek Charter School Site, stating they were "blown away" by the schools and would gladly send their kids to an old Kmart. They noted that the school had no cafeteria or library (there is a public

⁸⁸ The thoroughness of the resolution, including its rules and process for debate, left no doubt whatsoever that the Committee was benefiting from Governor Martin's vast political and parliamentary experience. Unfortunately, the ease with which such a detailed resolution suddenly appeared before the Committee opened Governor Martin to unmerited suspicions that this outcome had been pre-ordained in some manner.

library nearby), but it had a large and well-equipped computer lab. Mr. Boorman inquired how long it took to go from acquiring the building to putting students in seats. Mr. Erwin replied that it took less than one year.

Dr. Udall briefed the members on expectations for the upcoming public meetings. The group discussed the value of gaining public input at this stage. Dr. Udall noted that the project management team could postpone the public meeting. Some members express dissenting views about how to proceed with public meetings, so Rev. Woods moved to postpone the public meetings, with Mr. Boorman seconding the motion. Dr. Murrey felt that it was more important to avoid rushing the process, while Mr. Fox countered that the public meetings needed to wrap up by the next week if the Committee were to meet its schedule. A majority of the members favored postponement, so Dr. Udall indicated that the meetings would shift to the week of June 12.

June 8, 2006⁸⁹

In this meeting, the Committee began the hard work of negotiating a final recommendation. Governor Martin outlined the parliamentary process for amending the resolution using the green (affirmative) and the red cards (negative) in this straw-vote process, noting that the procedures represented a modified version of Robert's Rules of Order. He likewise asked members to be brief in their discussions, avoiding repetition and closing a subject once it had been decided. Following a five minute recess for members to review the resolution and a list of amendments that had been submitted by members prior to the meeting, the process began. The debate is summarized section by section below.

⁸⁹ Mecklenburg County, *June 8 Meeting Summary*, <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Consensus-Building/Calendar/June+8+Summary.htm> (accessed September 16, 2007).

SECTION 1

Mr. Kirchner proposed a total of \$140 million in COPs based on taking the proposed figures from CMS staff and then eliminating the land-oriented costs and reducing construction costs by 9%. Mr. Greene proposed a total of \$266 million in COPs, representing 23% in renovations and 77% in new construction and reviewed his own rationale for adding Harding, South Mecklenburg, Idlewild and Amay James Pre-K to the renovation priority list, plus all identified new schools. He noted that increasing the number and percentage of school improved by renovations would be a significant step in increasing the public's level of trust in the process. Mr. McElrath stated that he supported having a bond referendum prior to issuing COPs, if a combination of COPs and a bond referendum were to be pursued, basing his views on public discussions at the West Charlotte Center and other public input. Mr. McClung advocated for COPs in the amount of \$95 million, while Kelly Alexander proposed increasing the COPs to \$219 million.

Jerry Fox proposed an amendment to reduce the amount for COPs to \$101 million (30% for renovations and about 70% for new schools and additions) but expressed concern that his amendment would be contingent upon decisions in other sections. He reviewed his proposed changes to Section 5, in which he proposed including a provision that the county would use \$9 million of Mecklenburg County's share of the North Carolina state education lottery annually as security for the \$101 million in COPs until the bonds are paid in full, although he acknowledged that such a long-term commitment could not be guaranteed. Mr. Fox opposed the Kirchner amendment, stating that if the County issues non-voter debt prior to a bond referendum, then it would need to submit something different than what

was defeated in the 2005 bond referendum. He expressed the need for the community to avoid an arena-like syndrome⁹⁰ with the Committee providing some cover for the County Commissioners. Ms. Wilson opposed the Kirchner amendment because the new-school ratio was too high, believing a more balanced approach was needed. However, Mr. Kirchner noted that the only new school he had added was Ridge Road middle school based on input from Ms. Lennon. Both amendments were defeated.

Mr. Greene proposed an amendment to increase the amount of COPs to \$266 million, reiterating his aim to balance new schools with renovations, which he perceived was an important point for the community, noting the "arena effect" surrounding the use of COPs. Mr. Davis expressed his concern that the Greene amendment was in conflict with the guiding principles regarding immediate and long-term issues, and Mr. Fox cautioned that \$266 million in COPs was too high—"The fewer projects, the better." Mr. Morgan likewise questioned the high amount and referred to Harry Weatherly's presentation on County guidelines and financial thresholds. He also voiced concern about County funding requests for libraries, courts, and parks and recreation facilities based on reports from a recent Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee meeting. However, Governor Martin noted that this Committee's responsibility was to consider only school needs, and that it should make its own best decision without consideration of other potential funding requests. The Greene amendment was also defeated.

⁹⁰ In 2001, Mecklenburg County voters defeated a referendum to build an NBA arena in Uptown Charlotte. However, the Charlotte City Council subsequently altered the funding package slightly from the original bond ordinance that had been on the ballot and under the cover of this being a *different* package than the one the voters had rejected, the Council funded construction of the new arena with COPs instead. Many voters were outraged, and since the 2002 approval of the arena funding package, the level of discontent with local governing bodies has continued to rise. Some question whether the defeat of the 2005 CMS bonds was fallout from this situation.

Mr. Alexander initially proposed an amendment to increase the COPs funding to \$219 million but subsequently reduced the amount to \$190 million based on proposed changes to funding for Wilson Middle School, which led Mr. McCoy to oppose the amendment. Dr. Murrey then moved to amend the Alexander amendment by resetting the amount to \$171 million, leaving the same project list but reducing their costs by roughly 10%. Mr. Alexander and Dr. Murrey explored potential for common ground but were unable to attain a "friendly" amendment. Governor Martin emphasized that the current votes were for a recommended COPs amount only and did not bind the group to specific projects. With Mr. McClung's encouragement, Mr. Alexander and Dr. Murrey continued their efforts to find common ground. Mr. Alexander agreed to split the difference and proposed a "friendly" amendment that set the COPs amount at \$180 million, and Dr. Murrey withdrew his amendment. However, the amendment was nonetheless defeated resoundingly.

Mr. McClung proposed an amendment to specify the project allocations on the ballot, a proposal he termed "the X-Bond" and had spent the previous week advocating privately but unsuccessfully with other members of the Committee. He subsequently withdrew the amendment. Mr. McElrath then proposed an amendment to schedule COPs after a bond referendum, expressing concern about the arena effect and public perceptions. However, this amendment was defeated as well.

Ms. Kakadelis proposed an amendment to reduce the amount of COPs to \$109 million, stating that her proposal would sustain cash flow levels until 2008 so the County could look at long-term solutions while maintaining spending levels at roughly \$170 million annually.

The Kakadelis amendment was defeated. A substitute amendment by Mr. Alexander was withdrawn, and the committee agreed to close Section 1 at \$150 million.

SECTION 2

Mr. Boorman and Dr. Murrey proposed to change the date of the bond referendum to November 2006 rather than November 2007, with Mr. Boorman emphasizing that November 2006 was a more logical option for the next bond referendum. He stated that the Committee had gained knowledge and seen firsthand that there are both new school needs and renovation needs and thus had credibility in the community—"We're a non-political and diverse group ... The community is looking for action." While the Board of Education's credibility was low, it would not get any better by the fall of 2007, whereas the Committee's credibility would diminish over time. Dr. Murrey urged the group to "strike while the iron is hot" and noted that the Committee could more easily sustain momentum for five months than for 17 months. Mr. Reid agreed philosophically but stated that he would like to give Dr. Gorman and the CMS Task Force time to settle in with their proposed changes.⁹¹ However, Ms. Lennon opposed the amendment, stating that the momentum and urgency would not change by 2007. In contrast, Mr. McClung said, "If we're going to have faith in the County Commissioners with COPs then we need to show faith in the public with bonds." Ms. Kakadelis and Mr. Fox spoke against the amendment based on insufficient change in CMS making it too short of a time to rally support for a 2006 bond package. Mr. Greene expressed ambivalence—"I support a public vote, but I'm nervous about two failed bond referenda." Bill Grigg also cautioned that it was too much to ask the public to buy into

⁹¹ By this time, the hiring of Dr. Peter Gorman as the new CMS superintendent had been announced.

COPs in the summer of 2006 and GO bonds in the fall of 2006. Mr. Morgan, with the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee meeting and its broader perspective still fresh in his mind, questioned the County's ability to absorb such high debt, supporting a bond referendum in 2007. The outcome was surprising, however. When the members voted, a 14-14 tie resulted, requiring Governor Martin to break the tie with his negative vote, which defeated the amendment.

Mr. Reid proposed to change the date to September 2007 but had to depart early, so Ms. Kakadelis agreed to bring forth the motion. Governor Martin pointed out that there would be no primaries in the suburban towns, so there would be an additional cost associated with having the bond referendum during a primary election. Dr. Murrey expressed concern regarding low voter turnout in a primary vote, as did a number of others. This amendment was also defeated by an overwhelming majority.

Ms. Lennon then proposed an amendment to trim project costs by at least 10%, without changing the maximum total as a way to rebuild public trust. Although he seconded the motion and indicated that he thought it was a good idea, Mr. Boylan was concerned about an arbitrary percentage. Mr. Boorman indicated support for reducing costs but expressed a desire to find a better way to do it. Mr. Greene was concerned that the amendment could affect renovations disproportionately relative to new construction costs. Mr. Chamberlain indicated that CMS could find a way to do it, though he voiced discomfort with the idea. Mr. McCoy opposed the amendment, and Mr. Alexander also expressed concerns about a 10% reduction across the board. Ms. Schmidt asked whether some of the "cost savings" would shift to maintenance costs later. Mr. Chamberlain acknowledged the risk of creating a

future cost by deferring costs—"It's pay me now or later." This led Ms. Lennon to withdraw the amendment.

Dr. Murrey proposed increasing the bond total to \$400 million and that new projects had been identified as critical and short-term needs. Starting with the May 2007 list, he subtracted the cost of athletic fields and real estate and reduced figures for elementary, middle and high schools by 10%. Mr. Fox countered the proposal with a recommendation that GO bonds be submitted to a referendum of County voters in 2007 with projects to be chosen by CMS staff based on those needing the most urgent attention. Governor Martin ruled that the Fox amendment was not germane to Dr. Murrey's amendment. After group discussion, Dr. Murrey agreed to add the clause "not to exceed" \$400 million, and after further discussion, he agreed to add language that indicated that projects would be based on the most urgent needs as recommended by CMS. The members collaborated to refine the language and then voted to pass the amendment. Based on a recommendation by Mr. Kirchner and Mr. Fox, the committee agreed to drop Section 4 and to move forward with Section 5 at the next meeting.

June 15, 2006⁹²

With the Committee meeting at Central Piedmont Community College, Dr. Udall reported on the recent public meetings. Seven meetings had been held over three days, and although total attendance was low (approximately 45 people), Committee members had been present and made outstanding contributions. Eight themes or trends were noted across the meetings:

⁹² Anne Udall, e-mail with attached SBSC Minutes for May 19, May 25 and June 15, 2006 to Michael L. Murdock, September 21, 2007.

1. There was a level of unease and lack of trust in the Board of Education and an expressed need for transparency;
2. There is a need for communication;
3. There is a need for accountability;
4. People have clear preferences for a 2006 or 2007 bond referendum;
5. Regardless of their preference, people understood the rationale for the bonds;
6. The date of the referendum seemed less important than addressing trust and accountability issues;
7. The location of the meeting shaped the concerns of the attendees; and,
8. The public had high expectations for Dr. Gorman. Indeed, a ninth trend was suggested—the community had high expectations for the Committee as well.

Dr. Udall noted that the Committee carried the burden of making sense of and considering public concerns and addressing county-wide needs, rather than the concerns of one or a few specific places. Mr. Goode indicated that he found issues of trust in the community most striking. Ms. Wilson observed that the public is expecting the Committee to come up with something "earth-shattering" and that meeting participants did not think its ideas were new or bold enough—"They seem to be expecting us to be more innovative." In her opinion, the Committee needed to spend time looking at new ways of doing things and undertaking the work necessary to respond to community challenges. Mr. Alexander noted that the public clearly had concerns about the Board of Education—"This is one of the largest rocks in the road." He also cautioned that once test scores were released, "a volatile situation could become hyper-heated" if a number of high schools are put under review. Thus, he advised that there must be simultaneous efforts to build schools and improve education;

they cannot be addressed separately. Adam Bernstein reported that participants at the East Mecklenburg High School session resented that the Committee had arbitrarily cut a CMS proposed project list. Their view was that the Committee should be making the case for \$466 million, not looking to cut the dollar amount. Governor Martin inquired whether participants discussed county spending guidelines, to which Mr. Davis replied that the issues did not connect with people—"They did not grasp it."

Moving on to the next phase of the meeting, Mr. Fox raised questions about inconsistencies in language between the June 8th Meeting Summary and subsection 2(b) of the resolution. After considerable group discussion, a key point for some Committee members was having a body, in addition to CMS, review the process. Mr. Boorman and Mr. Fox reached consensus on the following language:

Subsection 2(b): This referendum would be intended to cover all capital needs for CMS until November 2009; projects to be included in the November 2007 bond package would be the most urgent needs determined later based on an assessment of proposed CMS projects by a to-be-determined citizen advisory group such as the SBS Committee (if in existence) or by a similar group, such as the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee.

Mr. Kirchner proposed an amendment to Subsection 2(c) as follows:

A November 2006 General Obligation Bonds in the amount of \$37,200,000 for the sole purpose of acquiring land specific submitted by this Committee action as Exhibit III – "2006 Land GO Bond" (a project list was distributed to members).

Since Mr. Kirchner was absent, Mr. Morgan spoke on his behalf. He stated that their rationale stemmed from indications from the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee that there would likely be a considerable Park and Recreation land bond in 2006 on which CMS could "piggyback."⁹³ He stated that CMS could purchase the land now for projects

⁹³ This in fact did not occur. The only bond referenda on the November 2006 ballot were various ones for the City of Charlotte. Cf. Mecklenburg County Board of Elections, *Mecklenburg County, NC 11/07/2006 General Election Summary*, <http://meckboe.org/pages/ENR2006/Summary.html> (accessed September 23, 2007).

that would be a part of the 2007 GO bond referendum—"CMS can accelerate the building process." He also stated that this approach addressed the trust issue, given that some community members wanted the opportunity to vote in 2006 while the County also moved forward on COPs.

Governor Martin and Mr. Davis posed questions seeking clarification on how the amendment might impact the proposed November 2007 bond referendum. Mr. Davis expressed uncertainty about whether the amendment would result in costs creeping upward or being reduced. Mr. Morgan responded that the amendment did not presume a change in the amount of the 2007 referendum but that it could result in a \$10 million reduction in the 2006 COPs amount. While Mr. Goode supported the idea because of its options for long-term flexibility, as well as liking the opportunity to see how the public might respond to a bond referendum in 2006, Wesley Simmons cautioned that the public wanted to vote on "something of substance" and as such a "token land bond" might not be well-received. Mr. Owens likewise expressed opposition for philosophical reasons.

When asked by Mr. Fox, Harry Jones indicated that it was too early to say what if any bond requests would be made for 2006. Mr. Fox and Mr. Morgan agreed on a "friendly amendment" that would allow for the CMS land acquisition bond only "if there is a Mecklenburg County referendum for other land acquisition purposes." Mr. Alexander supported the proposal, but on the other hand, Ms. Kakadelis while supporting the idea of land banking, felt that the Committee was not looking at new and innovative strategies such as more efficient use of land and joint-use strategies, noting that citizens want to see changes before they give the money—"I think [voter] turnout was low because of CMS fatigue."

Likewise, Mr. Boorman, while being a proponent of land banking, thought it would be hard to sell to the public when some schools would not be built or renovated for years to come—"We have urgent needs, and you want to buy land? It might compromise our credibility."

Dr. Murrey also said that he could support a land bond, but that he couldn't support going to the public with a small bond in 2006 when there were greater needs. Mr. Alexander suggested that with the right mix of projects and a sense of "fairness and equity in the process," there might not be resistance to land banking. Nonetheless, the amendment was defeated.

Mr. McClung proposed an amendment to Subsection 2(c) that would provide \$36 million in GO bonds for pre-construction design in a November 2006 referendum. The \$36 million would be divided equally between the six Mecklenburg County districts. He made a case for an equal sharing of design funds to gain widespread public support, noting that the amendment would support CMS decentralization plans. However, Dr. Murrey expressed concern that design efforts in each district might compromise plans to develop districtwide prototype schools. Mr. Simmons also pointed to Garinger High School design funds that were approved by voters but never came to fruition. Mr. McClung's amendment was defeated.

In what he referred to as the "Star Wars Amendment," Mr. McCoy proposed a bond referendum in November 2006 in the amount of \$420 million for projects identified by CMS staff and Board of Education. He advocated the amendment as a bold measure to confront public debate and refocus the conversation on the education of children. He further stated that his amendment acknowledged public input and would make funds available for Dr.

Gorman's arrival. Dr. Murrey proposed a related amendment to place a GO bond referendum in the amount of \$37 million for land acquisition on the November 2007 ballot. However, he stated that he would rather keep the package together without breaking it up in a piecemeal approach in 2006 and 2007. Mr. McCoy expressed opposition, stating that the public wanted good schools and education now. Ms. Kakadelis also expressed frustration that the more the committee engaged in debates about the short-term, the more it delayed discussion of long-term solutions. While she liked Dr. Murrey's idea, she believed it removed the pressure for long-term solutions. Dr. Murrey's amendment was defeated with Governor Martin again having to cast the tie-breaking vote.

Discussions then resumed regarding Mr. McCoy's amendment. Mr. Simmons asserted that the Committee had not found consensus on a date for a bond referendum and that COPs could create a backlash without a public bond referendum in 2006. Also, there was no guarantee the County Commission would follow through on the Committee's recommendations in 2007. He urged the committee to support a plan that addressed renovation and growth based on what members had learned and seen firsthand in schools.

This led Mr. Edwards to ask what was different then than in 2005 and why some members thought there would be a different outcome. Mr. McCoy stated that community members had now moved beyond the demagoguery of 2005 and had seen the error of their ways, but Mr. Edwards questioned such an assessment of the community.

While Mr. McClung strongly desired a 2006 bond referendum, he had insufficient reasons to proceed with one. Bernard Johnson also wanted to support a 2006 bond referendum, but he

could not support such a large amount—"I want to change the paradigm with a small amount to address critical needs, then address the long-term issue with creative ideas." Mr. Simmons replied that Committee members had changed their minds because of what they had seen firsthand, though things had not changed politically, urging members not to be afraid of an anti-bond campaign and offering his own personal example regarding his home school, Cochrane Middle School, and concerns he had for his own children.

Mr. McMillan also cautioned members to refrain from denigrating the fact that political views were being advanced in the community. Political opinions are based on philosophical views, and the "elephant in the room" was that the Committee and others were delivering the same product without any bold changes and without engaging the client in what they want. Likewise, Teresa Williams commented that, "'Critical' means right now to me, not two years from now. Waiting is not bold and not different." She recalled that the survey results indicated that the majority of those who did not vote in 2005 would have voted for the bonds and observed that CMS may remain controversial and that some people may remain enmeshed in their views. However, "If we want to be the leaders we talk about, then we need to be it. The needs are real! It is there, and it is critical!" Mr. McCoy made a final appeal that the members had a responsibility as parents and informed community members to change the school system and to stand up and be bold, but the amendment was defeated. Governor Martin obtained consent to close Section 2 and move to Section 3.

Section 3 addressed the list of projects to be financed by COPs. As the Committee moved into this section of the resolution, Mr. Morgan declined to advance his amendment, which was contingent upon the passage of his prior proposal (the Kirchner amendment) under

Section 2 and indicated that he and Mr. Kirchner planned to submit an amendment at the next meeting. Mr. McClung likewise declined to advance his motion, which was contingent upon the passage of his prior proposal under Section 2. Mr. Fox then proposed acceptance of the CMS list of projects entitled "Proposed 2006 COPs with May 2007 Bonds" that had been presented previously, totaling \$149,756,000. He explained that the list comprised the most current urgent needs as identified by CMS staff and emphasized that it seemed logical to consider most urgent needs for COPs. Mr. Boorman emphasized the need for a list that represented a balance between land, new schools and renovations. However, Mr. McCoy opposed the amendment, stating it did not represent the needs of the whole county. Mr. Johnson also expressed opposition because more than \$29.6 million would be designated for "pre-construction design," which, in his opinion, did not fall into the category of critical or urgent needs. Mr. McClung voiced strong opposition to the amendment as well, noting that the first nine items on the list were in District 1 and that only one item would benefit District 3. Governor Martin noted that there is more growth in some areas, so there will always be imbalances, but Mr. Morgan stated that his concern is that the public would interpret the amendment as "rubber stamping" a CMS plan. Instead, he suggested that a forthcoming amendment would include some thoughtful considerations and calculations for a project list, including some significant renovations.

Mr. Alexander moved to amend the project list by adding Harding and Garinger High School renovations, the Garinger project having been part of failed 2005 bond. Don Cave, a member of CMS staff who was present, stated that Garinger was previously on the bond referendum but that renovation plans were on hold now that the school was splitting in multiple small high schools. At this point, Mr. Davis advised to the group that it needed to

return to its guiding principles rather than continuing to add new projects—"We're making too many trips to the dessert bar."

Mr. Alexander expressed a desire to keep the COPs as close to \$150 million as possible, acknowledging Governor Martin's observation that his amendment added \$22 million to the proposed COPs that has been capped at \$150 million in a previously approved amendment, and suggested eliminating pre-construction items to keep the list under the cap. When Dr. Murrey asked whether land acquisition would part of the eliminated pre-construction costs, Mr. Alexander stated that it would be. When Dr. Murrey noted \$14 million in design and \$19 million in land acquisition, Mr. Alexander agreed to adjust his amendment to eliminate those expenses and reduce the cost impact of his proposed additions to the project list.

Governor Martin then noted that the amendment would add two projects totaling \$22.8 million and would reduce the overall list by an amount of \$22.9 million by eliminating land and design costs. Mr. McClung thought that adding Garinger was a great idea, but that for community harmony, the Committee should reconsider cuts in funding for the Matthew-Mint Hill school. Mr. Boylan also questioned the ramifications of eliminating preconstruction costs when they were once considered urgent. Ginny Setzer and Ms. Wilson expressed serious concerns about the ramifications of eliminating costs for two high schools.

Messrs. Boylan, Owens, McMillan and others offered a "friendly amendment" to the Alexander amendment, proposing to take the \$150 million in COPs, add \$22 million in costs for Garinger and Harding as proposed by Mr. Alexander and then reduce the list by 10% across the board rather than eliminate any projects. Such modifications would bring the total to \$155.3 million. Mr. Alexander and Mr. Simmons accepted this modification to their

amendment. Mr. Boorman lamented that Mr. Kirchner and Mr. Morgan's amendment was not ready for presentation and consideration by the group. Mr. McMillan then offered a "friendly amendment" to the Alexander amendment that would allow for a range of reductions resulting in 10% cut to the total, rather than proposing a uniform 10% cut across the board, a change Mr. Alexander accepted.

Ms. Tucker questioned adding Garinger to the list because it had not appeared on recent project lists. Mr. Simmons recalled Mr. Chamberlain's explanation regarding splitting the facility into multiple, smaller high schools but asserted that the reconfigured school would still require a new science wing in short order. Board of Education Vice Chair Kit Cramer confirmed that CMS had applied for a grant for Garinger, so the division of the school into smaller schools was a foregone conclusion, although the requirements for the transition were still unknown. Ms. Kakadelis recalled that Garinger was once part of the approved 1999 bond referendum, while Mr. McClung noted that the 2005 bond material listed Garinger as a construction-only project that would be the next phase of a multi-phase project.

Mr. Fox commented that the Committee could be putting CMS in worse shape by including projects that staff had recommended delaying. Mr. McMillan responded that while he did not like to deviate from staff recommendations, the proposed modifications would not change the substance of the list. Ms. Tucker indicated that she could support the idea of adding renovation projects, but that it would be imprudent to add projects to the COPs package that CMS could not undertake right away. This led Dr. Murrey to propose a "friendly amendment" to replace the Garinger renovation project with a renovation project at Idlewild Elementary School, which was #6 on the CMS recommended 2007 bond list, and

for the same amount of funding. This would put the Garinger work on the 2007 bond referendum list. Mr. Simmons and Mr. Alexander accepted the modification. In addition, there would be the overall reduction of 10% to total, but not a flat-rate cut across the board. Governor Martin noted that the proposed changes would place the total at approximately \$155M. Mr. Fox and Ms. Tucker agreed with the changes, but Mr. McCoy proposed adding Amay James and suggesting waiting on the vote until Morgan and Kirchner had analyzed the costs. Mr. Boylan indicated his discomfort with the methods and seemingly random cuts, which led Governor Martin to observe that the Committee seemed to have the making of a good compromise, asking those who had doubts to remember that, ultimately, the County would do what it had to do and was able to do.

When votes were taken on both amendments, the Alexander amendment to the Fox amendment passed, and then the Fox amendment passed. Without objection, Governor Martin closed Section 3.

Several members desired to adjourn at that point, but a slim majority of the members (9-8) voted to extend the discussion when Governor Martin noted that seven amendments would have to be considered next week if the meeting adjourned. Based on Section 5, which allowed supporting and explanatory statements to be added to the Resolution by amendment,

Mr. Boylan and Ms. Lennon proposed a "Watch Your Wallet" amendment to capture the Committee's comments about cost savings and to set a deliberate frame for the deliverable. Such an amendment would provide an opportunity to bridge the trust gap and offer a formal

way to capture the Committee members' thinking about the 10% cost reductions. Ms. Tucker, who seconded the motion, stated that the Committee would fail to do anything significant if it only divided the 2005 bond into a COPs package and another bond package—"This is what we have talked about, and if we leave without it, we will have wasted our time here." Mr. McCoy offered a "friendly amendment" that would open CMS' bidding process to multiple bidders by adding language that would include "... periodic open bidding for construction management, design and administration." Mr. Boylan and Ms. Tucker agreed to the "friendly amendment."

Mr. Owens offered a "friendly amendment," cutting the language about "public input to the fullest extent possible." He preferred language that did not imply that CMS did not currently undertake cost-savings measures. Mr. Davis posed the question about whether "quality" could be added to or addressed in the amendment, noting that there should be a performance-based incentive to ensure CMS staff supported and implemented the Committee plan after the Committee disbanded. Dr. Murrey asserted that the public was looking for responsiveness, accountability and transparency, which CMS had not provided to date. He suggested adding language about an annual report card detailing how the cost reductions had been made and offering explanations when deviations had been made in use of bond funds, offering this language as a "friendly amendment," to which Mr. Davis noted that CMS already *had* a tool for accountability and reporting, the Balanced Scorecard, and that it was not using it.

Mr. Fox expressed concern about the clause, "... completed by 2006," noting that the high school prototypes, which would bring cost-savings, could not be done that year. Mr.

McMillan proposed a "friendly amendment," changing the clause to, "... by August 2007." Mr. Boylan agreed to the amendment and the Boylan/Lennon amendment passed. With this, the meeting adjourned.

June 23, 2006⁹⁴

The final meeting of the School Building Solutions Committee was held in the Government Center. The primary task of the day was to finalize the Committee's resolution and recommendations to the Board of Education and the County Commission. Governor Martin had the Committee review its previous efforts on the resolution. However, what had appeared settled the week before was now seen to be far from settled. In the intervening time, objections had been raised by a minority of the members concerning the departure from the CMS prioritized project list, particularly in having elevated the renovations at Harding University High School and Idlewild Elementary School in order to include them in the 2006 COPs proposal at the expense of removing the new Ridge Road middle school, which had been the #2 project on that list but was removed. The promised Morgan/Kirchner amendment had been in negotiation.⁹⁵ A proxy voting form had been sent to all the members in the event that they would not be able to attend the final meeting.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Minutes are not available for this meeting, so the narrative for this meeting is based largely on the personal recollections of the author and the interviewees, as well as the June 24, 2006 report of *The Charlotte Observer* in Celeste Smith, "Panel Decides - Debate Remains: CMS Citizens Committee Backs Immediate Borrowing for Urgent Construction, Bond Referendum in 2007; Some Members Unhappy with Final Proposal," *The Charlotte Observer*, June 24, 2006.

⁹⁵ Tim Morgan, e-mail to Rhonda Lennon and Jim Kirchner, June 19, 2006.

⁹⁶ Jennifer Holland, e-mail with attachments to SBSC Members, June 19, 2006.

Mr. Davis was circulating an amendment to incorporate the Balanced Scorecard as a measure of CMS' success in implementing changes to increase public trust.⁹⁷

While a number of issues were raised and resolved, and a number of comments and observations were shared by Committee members, just as in other sessions, the primary question that would be addressed that day as the matter of Ridge Road middle school. Ms. Lennon proposed an amendment to the resolution that removed the Idlewild Elementary School renovation project and restored the higher priority Ridge Road new construction project in its place. After a great deal of discussion, the Committee split on the amendment, which resulted once again in Governor Martin having to break the tie. Governor Martin voted against the amendment, stating that he believed that some very difficult but fruitful negotiations had transpired during the June 15 meeting, and he felt an obligation to honor the Committee's hard work by supporting the compromise that had been worked out in that meeting.

This proved to be a point that galvanized the minority who were either disinclined to support the final resolution or were sitting on the fence and waiting for something to push them to one side or the other. Although from that point the remaining work of the Committee was completed in an expeditious manner, with the final resolution recommending \$172 million in COPs in 2006 and up to \$400 million in GO bonds in a November 2007 referendum passing with 23-9 majority, those remaining in the minority would no longer be inclined to seek a united front. Following the meeting, Ms. Lennon expressed her disappointment—"We were supposed to take care of the worst first ... We

⁹⁷ Tom Davis, e-mail to SBSC Members, June 21, 2006.

didn't do that."⁹⁸ Mr. McCoy likewise had voted against the resolution, not because the northern part of the county had been neglected but because he felt that it had received too much. Mr. Morgan voted against the resolution because it had excluded innovative solutions like "big-box" conversions—"We ended up with a plan that's a watered-down version of the bond plan defeated by voters." Governor Martin indicated, "I would have liked to have gotten a few more (votes) ... But we got what we got." He advised the Committee that he would send out a formal resolution for them to sign prior to the presentation of its report to the Board of Education and the County Commission, suggesting that obtaining thirty signatures would be a "strong endorsement." With this, the final meeting of the School Building Solutions Committee concluded.

June 27, 2006

On June 27, Governor Martin appeared before a joint meeting of the CMS Board of Education and the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners to present the report of the School Building Solutions Committee. Prior to the presentation, a group comprised of nine members who had opposed the final resolution—Mark Erwin, Ginny Scoggins-Setzer, Rhonda Lennon, Ralph McMillan, Tom Davis, Jeff Ross, Tim Morgan, Lynn Schmidt, and Lindalyn Kakadelis—assembled a minority report presenting recommendations it felt had been left out of the Committee's final resolution. This minority report also had the opportunity to be heard by the assembled elected officials following Governor Martin's presentation.

Governor Martin began by describing the Committee and its work:

⁹⁸ Smith, "Panel Decides - Debate Remains: CMS Citizens Committee Backs Immediate Borrowing for Urgent Construction, Bond Referendum in 2007; Some Members Unhappy with Final Proposal."

I am here this afternoon in response to your kind invitation, and to bring the recommendations of the School Building Solutions Committee, which you charged:

To propose a school capital plan that the community can support.

I believe we have done that. This Committee has met in formal session on 15 occasions over the past four months since your appointment, all in the open, and we have conducted an additional 10 public meetings throughout the County seeking timely input from other citizens. We have received your full support including funding to enable us to have the benefit of our own staff and consultants as needed ...

... As you intended, this Committee reflects the cross-section of both the public at large, and its elected governments. We have 14 Democrats, 14 Republicans and 7 non-affiliated voters. Our box-shaped distribution curve of political philosophies has 1/3 on the left, 1/3 on the right, and 1/3 in the center. Roughly 1/3 voted **against** the 2005 school bonds, 1/3 voted **for** it with confidence, and 1/3 voted **for** it **but** with serious misgivings.

He noted the outcome of the surveys that informed the Committee's recommendations:

To understand our recommendations, keep in mind what the poll told us about the defeat of the bond referendum last November. It showed a considerable loss of confidence in CMS leadership, and in some instances even loss of respect. That also echoed in the public input we heard. While regrettable, that is somewhat more palatable as long as each of us can point to the other side of the political spectrum to assign blame. What encourages me is that the Board of Education has begun to recognize that the problem could be on both sides, and that most of you are making an effort to reform the interaction and instill a more collegial method of dispute. That will not be easy, but I believe it is vitally necessary.

Be that as it may, our goal was to develop a plan for orderly financing of school facility needs within that climate of public distemper. After extensive study and deliberation (some 52 hours of it), we have agreed by a solid vote of 23-to-9 to make the following recommendations:

He outlined the recommendations contained in the approved Committee resolution, particularly the recommendation for COPs, but then he moved to the matter of the future bond referendum:

We chose not to present to you a detailed recommendation of specific projects for the next bond referendum in 2007. There is a list of needs totaling \$444 million, which was the basis for our recommendation of a \$400 million bond issue in 2007. We felt that a more complete study of these projects was needed before it goes to the voters. There is plenty of time for that. We do recommend that the Board of Education ask a committee of lay-citizens to help review the project list before you submit a final package to the voters. You have several excellent, standing committees ready to do this with you, such as CCBAC, the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee. Individuals on our Committee are willing to serve you on those standing committees, and I commend any of them for consideration ...

He then moved on to discuss the final project list, acknowledging the disagreement amongst the minority:

I would acknowledge to you that Ridge Road Middle is regarded by CMS staff as an even higher priority. A motion to add it, but to eliminate \$18 million worth of urgent land acquisitions for future school sites,

was defeated by a vote of 9-to-17. Ridge Road was one of a group of four complete, new schools, each ranked in a tie for the #1 priority, with Idlewild just two spots back, and Harding close behind ...

A few members said this issue led them to vote No on the final Resolution as amended. Some wanted to add Ridge Road, while others wanted to reduce the COPs package back to \$150 million. Some even wanted both. This requires me to comment on one other factor that you must consider. Members of both parties have said they would support a COPs proposal if it was for both construction and renovation, and provided it was affordable. That's what we propose ...

Once again, it is important to note that half of those who voted Friday to remove Harding and Idlewild, nevertheless voted For the final Resolution, affirming that it is more important to move forward than to insist on a personal or regional or political preference. Not all did so, but half did.

That, Ladies and Gentlemen, was the beauty of your concept of appointing 35 citizens from across the political spectrum, to study the same information and see if it was possible for a strong majority to agree on a set of Guiding Principles, and then assemble a school facilities package that the people (most of them, anyway) can support. We did not get that elusive 30-to-5 majority that I had envisioned and publicly called for; but we did get better than a **two-thirds** majority. Not bad. We did not compromise principle, but we did compromise on how to balance expansion and renovation, because we agreed in principle that both were essential.

At this point, Governor Martin yielded to Ms. Lennon, who presented the minority report:

We the undersigned respectfully submit this report to the County Commission, School Board, and taxpayers of Mecklenburg County. Since March 2006, the School Building Solutions Committee weekly meetings have brought together a group of individuals appointed by the various elected bodies, attempting to find solutions to a problem that threatens the very quality of life in our community. While agreement is unanimous for renovations, new construction and other issues surrounding the educational facility needs of our county, the majority of the committee did not support several issues. Instead of offering innovative solutions, the adopted resolution offered merely a justification for the status quo.

Based upon the serious nature of the problems faced by this committee, a group of individuals feel compelled to express our thoughts regarding the outcome of the work. Some, but not all of us voted against the final recommendations.

The minority report went on to discuss the nature of the COPs recommendation, taking particular issue with its failure to meet the growth component of the CMS capital program:

CMS is growing by nearly 5,000 new students each year and we must build enough new seats for these students just to keep up with growth. Over 15,000 of our children are learning in trailers today. Another 5,000 students are learning on stages, in closets, and in hallways. The proposed COPs package only builds 3,200 new seats for students and an additional 1,000 seats in existing schools to replace mobile classrooms. Had the majority followed the CMS Staff's most critical needs list; we would have 4,400 new seats and 1,000 additional seats replacing trailers.

The minority report also took issue with the lack of innovative solutions in the majority recommendation:

The committee chose not to emphasize the success of adaptive reuse of buildings and chose not to endorse this stand-alone recommendation...

The committee also chose not to pursue the impediment of the State mandated cap on the number of charter schools ...

With the minority report complete, Governor Martin returned to the podium to respond:

Having read this Minority Report, I am pleased that it is not negative in tone and style. It offers some additional ideas that deserve to be considered by your elected Boards. We simply did not have a majority to recommend some of them. We did, of course, recommend their first numbered proposal, the 10% cost-saving measures. That was Ms. Lennon's amendment, and it carried unanimously. We did not consider their second proposal that the County Commissioners dictate building standards to the school board, and they never made that motion during weeks of deliberation.

I just fail to see anything in their additional ideas that would justify anyone voting against \$172 million in COPs or \$400 million in bonds. If it's there, it's too subtle for me. So I regard this Minority Report as just a few more interesting ideas, and not as an appeal for anyone to oppose our Committee recommendations ...

To the minority group's assertion that the Committee's recommendations were not bold enough, Governor Martin responded firmly:

You may feel [the majority report] was not "bold" enough, a criticism we have heard. I recall that you did not ask us to be **bold**; you asked us to help get schools built. We had plenty of "bold" amendments ... that could not muster six supporting votes from a practical Committee. A couple came close, like vacant store conversions and Charter Schools, and you might well take a look at what some others have done with those ideas. We heard about a new concept at UNC-Charlotte for leased schools, built by developers. This was not ready in time for our review, but something you will want to consider when it's completed.

Let me tell you what **is** bold here. To recommend COPs financing without a popular referendum, months after the defeat of a bond referendum, was **bold**. We simply believe it will deeply injure this community if we let our schools fall further behind. We don't equate schools with an arena ...

What is **bold** is to trust the voters to change their No votes to Yes votes, once there are some changes implemented by CMS. So, based on our poll, we call for the next bond referendum 16 months from now, to allow time for change agents to take charge. Bold. Smart.

Here's **really bold** for you: the Committee's COPs package has \$76 million for new, expansion and renovation projects in the North Mecklenburg District #1, rightly so, because that's where the most needs were identified by the CMS staff. That takes 44 % of our total COPs package, for 9 of the total 18 projects. I think any Minority Dissenters from North Mecklenburg should be saying "thank you", rather than voting against a proposal that does more for their area than for any of those who voted **for** our Majority Report. They may be disappointed that they could not pass their amendments to raise the North Mecklenburg lions' share to 51% (and even 60%) of the total. That's hardly a reason to vote NO. Unless you prefer to let others carry your burden for you ...

No member of the Committee won every vote. I think everyone was on the majority most of the time. We learned once again that when we disagree, we can do so without being disagreeable. We learned to respect each other, and how to earn respect.

Now, that was a beautiful experience. I sincerely wish the same for you. Thank you.

With this, the elected officials offered their observations and questions.

Commissioners Chairman Parks Helms said he's willing to take that risk. But he worries that the bitter tone of Tuesday's joint meeting of his board and the school board did little to build public confidence.

"The public is looking to these boards for leadership," he said. "We're going to have to come together on this."

Both boards will take up the proposal from Martin's panel in mid-July. Tuesday it garnered bipartisan criticism and praise.

[District 3 Board of Education representative George Dunlap] and county commissioners Norman Mitchell and Wilhelmenia Rembert, all Democrats, argued that the voters should weigh in on school bonds this year.

"Based on what I was expecting, my position is that you failed," Dunlap told Martin. "You were supposed to come up with something the community would support."

Martin said the panel voted to wait because there's not enough time to convince voters that CMS leadership has improved.

"Until you make some changes on your board," Martin told Dunlap, "you're going to lose" ...

Mitchell said he'll ask commissioners to put up to \$570 million in CMS bonds on this year's ballot. "I'm willing to take that gamble," he said.

But Helms, who heads the six-member Democratic majority, said afterward he's not.

The three Republicans have already said they'd oppose 2006 bonds ...

School board member Ken Gjertsen, a Republican who represents the south suburbs, gave the panel its strongest praise.

"I'm not going to second-guess what you did," he said. "You came up with a viable solution."⁹⁹

The most significant comment was made by George Dunlap, who so infuriated the nine minority report signatories that shortly after the conclusion of the presentation they went outside the meeting chamber and signed the majority plan in reaction, not to Mr. Dunlap having labeled the group a failure, but rather because of their perception that Mr. Dunlap had labeled *Governor Martin* a failure. Thus, they rose in defense of their leader to endorse the majority report. With a 32-3 majority endorsing the final report, the torch was then passed back to the Board of Education and the County Commission. The work of the School Building Solutions Committee was complete.

⁹⁹ Ann Doss Helms, "Fragile Accord on School Proposal - 9 Issue 'Minority Report'; Martin, Dunlap Spar Over Bonds," *The Charlotte Observer*, June 28, 2006.

CHAPTER 3

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

The theological framework supporting this project originates in the Reformed theological tradition.¹⁰⁰ As will be seen in Chapter 4, the Reformed tradition has no particular lock on the theological interpretation of the relationship of Christians to the culture in which they find themselves. However, this tradition is selected for two basic reasons. First, the author is ordained in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), a denomination that understands itself to be in this theological tradition. Thus, his theological training has been primarily within this tradition. Second, this tradition has a long and rich history of civic engagement and has much to commend itself to the study of this thesis. Thus, this reflection aims to provide a basis from which to evaluate the responses of the interviewees and both their actions and those of the other persons presented in the case study narrative. Furthermore, it will provide a basis for further ongoing research and efforts to continue work and ministry in the area of Christian engagement in the public square by offering a critique of prior efforts and alternative strategies and missional trajectories.

Presbyterians have a notoriously difficult time defining "the essential tenets of the Reformed faith." The *Confessional Nature of the Church Report* appended to the *Book of Confessions* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) speaks to that ambiguity:

¹⁰⁰ Howard L. Rice, *Reformed Spirituality: An Introduction for Believers*, 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991). Rice (p. 9) defines the Reformed tradition as "[embracing] those Protestant denominations which trace their roots to the Swiss Reformation in the sixteenth century led by Huldreich Zwingli in Zurich ... and by John Calvin in Geneva ..." Presbyterianism in the United States traces its origins to this tradition by way of the Church of Scotland and its founder, John Knox, who studied with Calvin in Geneva.

... Although some other wording may better express the intent, the phrase "essential tenets" is intended to protect freedom with the limits of general commitment to the confessions. That this is indeed the purpose of the phrase is made clear by the fact that both the former United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. and Presbyterian Church in the U.S. repeatedly answered in the negative overtures requesting that the church make a precise list of a few fundamental doctrines (once called "essential and necessary articles of faith") that must be accepted by ordained officers ... Ordained persons are free to be "instructed," "led," and "continually guided" by the confessions without being forced to subscribe to any precisely worded articles of faith drawn up either by the General Assembly or by a presbytery.¹⁰¹

The closest that one will come to a Presbyterian "checklist" in the *Book of Order* is the following:

In its confessions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) expresses the faith of the Reformed tradition. Central to this tradition is the affirmation of the majesty, holiness, and providence of God who creates, sustains, rules, and redeems the world in the freedom of sovereign righteousness and love. Related to this central affirmation of God's sovereignty are other great themes of the Reformed tradition:

The election of the people of God for service as well as for salvation;
Covenant life marked by a disciplined concern for order in the church according to the Word of God;
A faithful stewardship that shuns ostentation and seeks proper use of the gifts of God's creation;
The recognition of the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny, which calls the people of God to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God.

Thus, the creeds and confessions of this church reflect a particular stance within the history of God's people. They are the result of prayer, thought, and experience within a living tradition. They serve to strengthen personal commitment and the life and witness of the community of believers.¹⁰²

To understand the praxis that arises from these principles, one must first understand the roots of Presbyterian and Reformed spirituality. As will be seen, there is a particularly strong connection between this concept of spirituality and the action that results.

Presbyterianism has a reputation of being largely a faith of the head, not of the heart.

However, just as a head faith alone or a heart faith alone are not full expressions of Christian faith, neither is this view of Presbyterianism complete. Rich traditions of spirituality are part of the Reformed tradition to which Presbyterianism adheres. Nonetheless, the reputation

¹⁰¹ *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part I – Book Of Confessions*, (Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 1999), xxv.

¹⁰² *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Part II – Book of Order, 2004-2005*, (Louisville, KY: Office of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), 2004), Par. G-2.0500.

bears out largely because it is the dominant ethos of the denomination. This ethos arises from a number of cultural, historical, and sociological factors.¹⁰³ As a result, Presbyterians and other adherents of the Reformed tradition tend to be suspicious of the subjective aspects of the faith.¹⁰⁴

This may be understood, in part, by understanding some of the origins of Reformed spirituality seen in the writings of John Calvin. Calvin did not write so much about spirituality as what he termed *pietas*, or "piety." According to Calvin, writing in his first

Catechism:

True piety does not consist in a fear which willingly indeed flees God's judgment, but since it cannot escape is terrified. True piety consists rather in a sincere feeling which loves God as Father as much as it fears and reverences Him as Lord, embraces His righteousness, and dreads offending Him worse than death. And whoever have been endowed with this piety dare not fashion out of their own rashness any God for themselves. Rather, they seek from Him the knowledge of the true God, and conceive Him just as He shows and declares Himself to be.¹⁰⁵

Battles further explains Calvin's understanding of piety:

As this collection of classical passages indicates, the words *pius* and *pietas* in classical Latin referred first to the relationship of children to their parents. In the Roman family of the *paterfamilias* and the *materfamilias*, children were expected to fear, honor, obey, and love their parents. *Pietas* bespoke the mutual love and care between parents and their offspring.

The state was, after all (as Aristotle described it in his *Politics*), but the extension of the family. The king or emperor was the *paterpatriae*, the father of his country. Parricide, in Roman eyes the most horrendous crime of which man is capable, and subject to the cruelest and most unusual punishment of all, was extended to assassination of the ruler, as the parent of all. *Pietas*, then, in the larger sense summarized all the feelings of loyalty, love of country, and self-sacrifice for the common good which marked Roman citizenship.

The early Christians, whose supreme Ruler and Father was God, without divesting the word *pietas* of its familial and national meaning, carried the word to a higher use. For them the whole complex of relationships between God the Father and His earthly children was summed up in this one word. For

¹⁰³ Luder G. Whitlock, Jr., "Spiritual Direction in the Reformed Tradition," *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, Winter 2002: 314.

¹⁰⁴ Rice, 10.

¹⁰⁵ Ford Lewis Battles, *The Piety of John Calvin: An Anthology Illustrative of the Spirituality of the Reformer* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), 13.

Calvin, then, there is in the word the classical overshine of filial obedience. *Pietas* bespeaks the walk of us adopted children of God the Father, adopted brothers and sisters of Christ the Son.¹⁰⁶

Any attempt to understand Reformed spirituality and praxis and their relationship, then, must take as its starting point the centrality of God's sovereignty and freedom. God the Creator will not be subject to the agenda of those whom he has created, so any attempt to formulate a spirituality aimed at manipulating God into satisfying human needs as perceived by humans is doomed to fail. God will be the provider of those needs, not in the manner of one's own choosing, but according to God's sovereign will and his purposes.

Thus, the Reformed tradition understands spirituality in the context of God's election, not only of individuals, but of a people as well, and this election, while it achieves the salvation of a people, is not an end in itself. It is election for the service of God and of the world according to God's will. The covenant that defines this relationship is established in Jesus' response to the lawyer who asked him which was the greatest commandment – the commandment to love God with one's heart, mind, soul and strength is tied resolutely to the command to love one's neighbor as oneself.

The remaining themes discussed in the *Book of Order*, faithful stewardship that shuns ostentation and the recognition of the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny, both acknowledge the propensity of humankind to form God and his purposes into idols that supplant him. In this sense, the Reformed tradition is zealous in its circumspection and questioning of the forms of its spirituality and worship of God, and a tendency toward

¹⁰⁶ Ford Lewis Battles, ""The Piety of John Calvin" By Ford Lewis Battles: Introduction, True Piety According to Calvin," http://www.the-highway.com/piety1_Battles.html (accessed February 15, 2006).

aniconic worship space prevails in the tradition, perhaps most clearly demonstrated in the practices of Calvin in Geneva and the Puritan Congregationalists in New England.

It can be said that when God is dead, then man is dead, since man derives the meaning of his existence from the One who is his Creator. One might also affirm that the death of God prepares the way for the reappearance of the gods, the idols that seek to fill the metaphysical and spiritual vacuum of the culture.¹⁰⁷

Rice notes, as a result, the tendency of the Reformed tradition to be suspicious of outward expressions of piety or spirituality as one might expect in a community that defines its covenant life as "marked by a disciplined concern for order in the church according to the Word of God." He points to class bias, a rejection of works, a rejection of individualism, a rejection of sentimentality and a suspicion of otherworldliness as some of the forms of resistance that one encounters when discussing questions concerning piety and spirituality.¹⁰⁸

Resistance due to class bias arises from the generalization that Presbyterians tend toward a more affluent socioeconomic status and as a result have a greater sense of self-reliance and self-satisfaction, being uncomfortable with the apparent idleness associated with many spiritual disciplines.¹⁰⁹ The rejection of works relates to the perception originating in the Reformation that certain spiritual disciplines are thinly veiled attempts to circumvent grace as the means to bridge the gap between God and humanity.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷ Donald G. Bloesch, *The Crisis of Piety* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1968), 14.

¹⁰⁸ Rice, 48-60.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 49.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 50. A significant blind spot for the Reformed tradition has always been its tendency to define itself over against Roman Catholicism rather than on its own terms.

The Reformed rejection of individualism speaks to the strong Reformed emphasis against the privatization of religion¹¹¹ to the extent that it "shuns or belittles the horizontal dimension of discipleship."¹¹² While this sounds much like the concern with otherworldliness expressed further on, this concern actually relates to lingering concerns that people might come to view themselves as following Christ apart from a covenant community.

The rejection of sentimentality as "excessive emotionalism, which prefers feelings to careful thought ..." ¹¹³ has been the basis for schism in Presbyterianism in the United States, as evidenced by the "Old Side-New Side" and "Old School-New School" conflicts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These schisms, which arose in relation to the First and Second Great Awakenings, respectively, point to the struggle that has always faced Presbyterians in seeking the balance between objective and subjective truth. This aspect also leans the Reformed tradition towards an outward rather than an inward orientation.

Being suspicious of otherworldliness would suggest the type of individualism mentioned before. However, as Rice describes it, it seems to be another way of describing the body-mind dualism attendant with Gnosticism.¹¹⁴ The concern in the Reformed tradition is with a spirituality that ignores the call to participate in the demonstration of the Kingdom of God on earth, focusing instead on purely non-material concerns.

¹¹¹ Another instance of defining itself over against Roman Catholicism?

¹¹² Rice, 51.

¹¹³ Ibid., 55.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 58-59.

In short, Reformed spirituality can at times appear to be motivated not so much by what it is for, but rather by what it is against. It sees the shortcomings of other approaches and tries to assimilate those lessons. However, it is often an assimilation of negation rather than of affirmation. The resulting emphasis on reason becomes a strong influence that biases the Reformed tradition towards action and away from more contemplative considerations. These elements of Reformed spirituality, then, inform Presbyterian praxis in a manner that compels its adherents towards a deep engagement with social issues. Rather than a worldly preoccupation with strictly human concerns, Presbyterians see their social engagement as the natural outgrowth of their relationship with God and fellow humanity, the fulfillment of Jesus' great commandment.

A number of passages of scripture support this understanding of the Christian's role in the world. Writing from the heart of the Roman Empire while under house arrest by the Praetorian Guard, Paul sets the pattern for understanding the Christian's role in the world¹¹⁵ in his epistle to the church in Philippi. Beginning in chapter 1, Paul writes concerning his imprisonment and how his circumstances are working out for the furtherance of the gospel (vs. 12). He speaks of the opposition he is receiving from rivals but how the gospel is being preached nonetheless and solicits the prayers of the Philippians as he faces trial before Nero

¹¹⁵ Thayer and Smith, "Greek Lexicon entry for Kosmos", "The NAS New Testament Greek Lexicon", <http://www.biblestudytools.net/Lexicons/Greek/grk.cgi?number=2889&version=nas> (accessed February 16, 2006). The "world," defined by its New Testament designation (κόσμος), can be seen in this sense to mean "an apt and harmonious arrangement or constitution, order, government;" "the world, the universe;" or "the inhabitants of the earth, men, the human family ... the ungodly multitude; the whole mass of men alienated from God, and therefore hostile to the cause of Christ." However, a broader and more helpful definition would be "world affairs, the aggregate of things earthly ... the whole circle of earthly goods, endowments riches, advantages, pleasures, etc., which although hollow and frail and fleeting, stir desire, seduce from God and are obstacles to the cause of Christ."

and potential execution. Even expressing ambivalence regarding this potential fate over against the possibility of further opportunities to proclaim the gospel, Paul encourages the Philippians to continue their growth in the faith. (vss. 15-26) This sets the stage for the exhortation that follows:

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. (Phil. 1:27-30, NIV)

In verse 27, does Paul merely mean to tell the Philippians not to do anything that would detract from his proclamation of the gospel so that he will not be embarrassed by them should he come to see them? The Greek text tells us that he probably means considerably more. Translated literally, he tells them, "Only, in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, live your lives as citizens." (Μόνον ἀξίως τοῦ εὐαγγελίου τοῦ Ἐριστοῦ πολιτεύεσθε.) Paul adds further nuance to this exhortation in chapter 3:

Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you. For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body. (Phil. 3:17-21, NIV)

By telling the Philippians their citizenship (πολίτευμα) is in heaven, Paul casts the exhortation to live their lives as citizens (πολιτεύεσθε) in a much different light. On the one hand, Paul seems to be making an allusion to the Philippians' status as Roman citizens. On the other hand, he seems to be suggesting that this status should be viewed in its proper perspective because of its transitory nature. Perhaps he is doing both:

... the verb used (*politeuomai*) is related to *polis* (city), and some commentators see in it a conscious allusion to the dual citizenship of those to whom Paul writes. They belong to the properly constituted

polis of Philippi. They are also citizens of heaven, living incognito on earth; colonists of heaven, as Philippi was a *colonia* of Rome.¹¹⁶

Caird likewise affirms this view of Paul's usage:

... By derivation this verb means to 'to exercise the rights and duties of citizens', 'to take part in government', 'to have a particular kind of government'. In hellenistic Greek it could be used with the weakened meaning 'to behave' (Acts 23¹), and the RSV has assumed that this is so here. But there are two reasons for thinking that Paul may have had an ear for the word's etymology: he uses the cognate noun in 3²⁰ with its full sense of 'commonwealth', and he is addressing the residents of a city which has a deep civic pride in its status as a colony. He is reminding the Philippians that the gospel is the charter of the Christian commonwealth and asking them to live up to its claims.¹¹⁷

How then does Paul see the Christian negotiating these dual loyalties? His second letter to the church in Corinth suggests a possibility. Paul's appeal in 2 Cor. 5:11-21 takes an intensely personal tone, albeit expressed in the third person, which may lend some confusion rather than clarity to its interpretation. Paul seems compelled in his letter to heal a rift that has developed between this church and himself. Beginning in verse 11, he ties a sense of impending judgment to what he says from that point on through the remainder of chapter 5:

Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we try to persuade others; but we ourselves are well known to God, and I hope that we are also well known to your consciences. We are not commending ourselves to you again, but giving you an opportunity to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast in outward appearance and not in the heart.

Paul makes his appeal to their consciences as they examine his work in light of the gospel and that this in turn will commend him to them.

... Stoics saw the conscience as a watchman bestowed by God on individuals to guide them to live according to nature and to direct their moral progress (Hahn 1975:349). In much the same way, Paul appeals to the Corinthians' conscience to judge the sincerity of his motives. This assumes, of course, that their conscience has not been dulled through misuse, ignorance or disregard.

Although this may sound as if Paul is commending himself to them again, all he aims to do is to provide the Corinthians with the ammunition needed to answer his critics (v. 12). This is the second time that Paul has admitted saying something that could be taken as praising himself. In fact, nine out of thirteen

¹¹⁶ J. L. Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians* (Harmondsworth; Penguin, 1970), 66.

¹¹⁷ G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, in the Revised Standard Version, The New Clarendon Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 115.

Pauline uses of the verb *synistemi* (to commend) occur in this letter. Its frequent appearance shows that ministerial commendation was a bone of contention with the church.¹¹⁸

Paul's appeal follows with an attempt to explain his motivations in reaching out to the Corinthians, beginning in verse 13: He explains how the love of Christ compels him (ἡ γὰρ ἀγάπη τοῦ Χριστοῦ συνέχει ἡμᾶς) because he is convinced of the broad sweep of the gospel's impact, i.e., "...he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them." (NRSV) This in turn leads him to a radical new way of understanding his relationship to the Corinthians:

From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

Paul's understanding of the impact of the gospel on the entire created order, much in the same vein as he writes in Romans 8, implies that as a result there is nothing in the kosmos that can ever be viewed in the same way after the resurrection. All things have changed in the new creation (καὶνὴ κτίσις) and so the manner in which we treat one another must also change on the basis of that new modality.

All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (NRSV)

elaborates on the nature of this reconciliation:

Paul attributes his changed perspective to God, who did two things for him. First, he *reconciled* Paul *to himself through Christ*, and second, he *gave* him *the ministry of reconciliation* (v. 18). This is an amazing statement. The reconciled become reconcilers (Tolbert 1983:68). Paul is the only New Testament writer to use the noun *katallage* (*reconciliation*) and verb *katallasso* (to reconcile). The basic idea is to change or make otherwise. In Greek social and political spheres the term denoted a change in relations between individuals, groups or nations, while in the religious arena it was used of relationships between gods and humans. In Paul's writings, God is always the reconciler. Those in need of reconciliation are hostile human beings (2 Cor 5:18-19; Rom 5:10-11). This is the reverse of Hellenistic religion, where it is the

¹¹⁸ Linda L. Belleville, *Fear of the Lord Motivates Ministry*, <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/index.php?action=getCommentaryText&cid=6&source=1&seq=i.54.5.3> (accessed February 17, 2006).

human being that seeks restoration of the gods' favor, and also of Judaism, where confession of sin and repentance are the means by which reconciliation with God is sought (as in 2 Macc 1:5; 7:33; 8:29, Vorlander 1978:167). The initiative now is with God who changes a relationship of enmity to one of friendship. This is accomplished *through Christ*, that is, through his death on the cross (Rom 5:10).¹¹⁹

Because God has reconciled the world to himself in Christ, Paul now sees himself as having become an ambassador on Christ's behalf (ὕπὲρ Χριστοῦ οὖν πρεσβεύομεν).

The nature of Paul's appointment was to serve as one of *Christ's ambassadors*. The verb *presbeuō* (*are ambassadors*) means to be "elder" or "first in rank" (Liddell, Scott and Jones 1978). Here we might think of the role of the statesman, where age and high rank often go together. Then as now, an ambassador was someone who represented the interests of his or her nation abroad. In the Old Testament the range of duties included offering congratulations (1 Kings 5:1; 2 Sam 8:10), soliciting favors (Num 20:14), making alliances (Josh 9:3-7) and protesting wrongful actions (Judg 11:12). The Roman counterpart to the Greek *presbeutes* was the legate (*legatus*), who was duly appointed by the emperor to administer the imperial provinces on his behalf. Paul was similarly appointed by God to administer the gospel *on Christ's behalf* (*hyper Christou*; compare Eph 3:2). It is as though God himself were making a personal and direct appeal through Paul (v. 20).¹²⁰

In the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) *Book of Confessions*, the *Confession of 1967* makes a particular appeal for reconciliation during the discord of that period based on Paul's words.

God's reconciling work in Jesus Christ and the mission of reconciliation to which he has called his church are the heart of the gospel in any age. Our generation stands in peculiar need of reconciliation in Christ. Accordingly, this Confession of 1967 is built upon that theme.

In Jesus Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself. Jesus Christ is God with man. He is the eternal Son of the Father, who became man and lived among us to fulfill the work of reconciliation. He is present in the church by the power of the Holy Spirit to continue and complete his mission. This work of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is the foundation of all confessional statements about God, man, and the world. Therefore, the church calls men to be reconciled to God and to one another.¹²¹

If Paul's second letter to the Corinthians is viewed as something of a personal rapprochement to that church, attempting to mend the fences torn down in the first letter, then Paul's appeal to reconciliation seems to be more personal rather than general. Still, given the implication of this passage, namely, that God's reconciling act through Christ implies that those whom God has reconciled to himself must be reconciled to one another,

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ *Book of Confessions*, 253-254.

the passage certainly must have something to say to a community that holds a reservoir of faith-based social capital.

The prophets of the Old Testament had much to say in the same vein at various points, but two passages in particular illuminate an underlying principle, namely that Yahweh is not interested in the cultic practices of his people for their own sake. In Amos 5:21-24, we see a view developing in relation to the cultic practices of the Israelite community:

I hate, I despise your festivals, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Likewise, in Micah 6:6-8, we see a similar pronouncement:

With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Christian worship must be more than cultic practice. It is an act where the believer encounters God through the mediation of his Spirit, and this encounter transforms the believer, eliciting response to the encounter.

As far back as the eighth century before Christ the prophet Amos had insisted that true worship must be holy. It must come from a people whose lives are consecrated to God. God has no interest in the sacrifices of a wicked people or the praises of those who ignored the ethical demands of the law.

... Jesus must have had this prophecy in mind when he made very clear to a woman of Samaria that the day had finally come when the true worshiper would worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:1-26). For the Christian, holiness of life and sincerity of worship must go together; they must be of one piece.

For the Reformed theologian the integrity of the service of God and the service of neighbor is essential ...¹²²

¹²² Hughes Oliphant Old, *Guides to the Reformed Tradition: Worship* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 6-7.

There is a great deal of similarity between the passage from Amos and the passage from Micah.¹²³ Both passages, but particularly Micah, would suggest that the answer was already known to the community—"He has [already] showed you ... what is good."¹²⁴ The "good" that has been shown already is the intrinsic linkage between justice (מִשְׁפָּט) and righteousness (צְדָקָה) and their expression in the context of covenantal love (חֶסֶד)—"... what Yahweh expects from Israel is *mišpāt* and *ṣḏāqā*; they express the quintessence of his will."¹²⁵

Mišpāt is the primary term ... But *mišpāt* is called 'the fruit of *ṣḏāqā*', and the two are so closely coordinated that Amos' use of *mišpāt* is not to be understood out of relation to its source in and orientation to *ṣḏāqā*.¹²⁶

'To do justice' ... is to uphold what is right according to the tradition of YHWH's will, both in legal proceedings and in the conduct of life ... It is this concern with the claim created by the condition of the helpless as an obligation upon conduct which is meant in the expression 'to love mercy' (*hesed*). Such justice is based on the kindness and mutuality which recognizes the needy and responds in brotherly identification. 'To love mercy' is to choose and devote oneself to acts of that recognition ... Israel's God performs and seeks justice and mercy: the 'humble' walk with him in that course.¹²⁷

This unique synergy between *mišpāt* and *ṣḏāqā* suggests a link between these Old Testament prophets and Paul's understanding of reconciliation. However, given the expectations laid out by Jesus and the prophets, Luke 18:7, 8 seem to summarize the dilemma that haunts many Christians in relation to "[walking] with him in that course":

And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"

This dilemma is beautifully stated by H. Richard Niebuhr:

¹²³ James D. Newsome, Jr., *The Hebrew Prophets* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1984), 54.

¹²⁴ James Limburg, *Interpretation: Hosea-Micah* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1988), 192.

¹²⁵ James Luther Mays, *Amos: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1969), 92.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ James Luther Mays, *Micah: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 141-142.

In this situation a dark prospect opens before us as we reflect on the meaning of Jesus' question ... He may have meant, "Will he find belief or trust in God?" But he may also have meant, "Will he find any faithfulness among men?"¹²⁸

What constitutes faithfulness in this context? Paul writes to the church at Rome not to "... be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2, NRSV) The fundamental turn in human affairs occurs when those whom God has called choose the faithfulness that has first chosen them. However, this act of calling individuals does not occur in individualistic isolation. The calling has a context, and that context is a community, an assembly, an *ekklesia*.

Ottati, in particular, recognizes this dependence of the individual on the community in his assessment of the church as a reformed community. He begins with a working definition of the church: "The church is the association of those who acknowledge God's transformative way with the world in Jesus Christ, and whose purpose is to increase love of God and neighbor."

"The church is the association ..." It is not a solitary seer, a lone believer, or a mere collection of individuals. It is a society, since to be caught up in the messianic event of Jesus Christ, the person-for-others, entails an impulse to communion with God in community with others. Theologically understood, the society called church, its social nature, is not accidental but an essential expression of the community-forming power of God. Although we are chronically confused, misoriented, and misdirected in the ways that we live and move and deploy our powers, "the divine initiative elicits a new responsiveness that overcomes the brokenness of human relations to each other and to the divine." The gathering or assembling of the association called church is an embodiment and a sign of the transformative grace and promise of God overcoming isolation.¹²⁹

The importance of this key consideration cannot be emphasized enough. Such an understanding of this relationship of the individual to the church is the gateway to

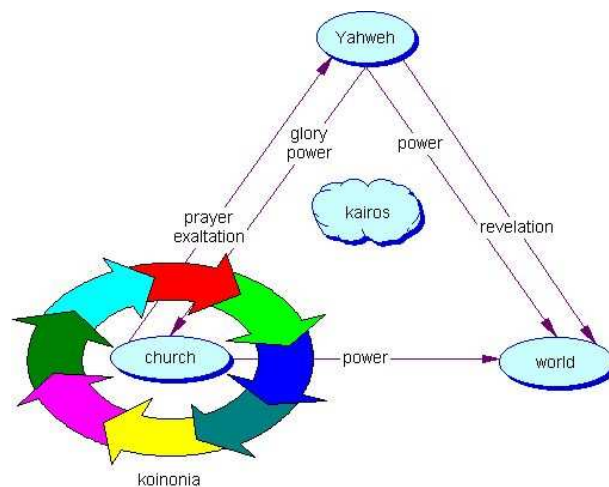
¹²⁸ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Faith on Earth: An Inquiry into the Structure of Human Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 1.

¹²⁹ Douglas F. Ottati, *Reforming Protestantism: Christian Commitment in Today's World*, 1st ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 94.

understanding God's redemptive work in the world through the agency of the church.

Placed in the context of a community of believers whom God has redeemed and is still reforming,¹³⁰ the Reformed church understands itself as the demonstration of the kingdom of God that is breaking into the world. This perspective provides a foundation for making the next move, which is the engagement of the Christian faith in the world.

The relationship of God to the church and to the world can be understood in the manner depicted below:¹³¹



In such a model as presented above, the church clearly must operate as a conduit, not as a repository for the grace of God as some theological models would envision it. First, an infinite grace simply cannot be "stored" in a finite receptacle, but second, the church is incapable of generating this grace of its own accord. The grace it receives *must be received*, and thus, the starting point of the conversation simply cannot be the church.

¹³⁰ This image considers watchwords of the Reformation, "*Ecclesia reformata sed semper reformanda*," "the church Reformed, always being reformed" as background.

¹³¹ Murdock, "The Goal: How Vision, Leadership and Prayer Changed a Community of Faith at the Crossroads of *Kairos* and *Koinonia*," 6.

The church's first word is not 'church' but Christ. The church's final word is not 'church' but the glory of the Father and the Son in the Spirit of liberty. Because of this the church, as Ambrose said, is like the moon, which has no light of its own or for itself. If it is the true church, the light that is reflected on its face is the light of Christ, which reflects the glory of God, and it shines on the face of the church for the people who are seeing their way to freedom in the darkness.

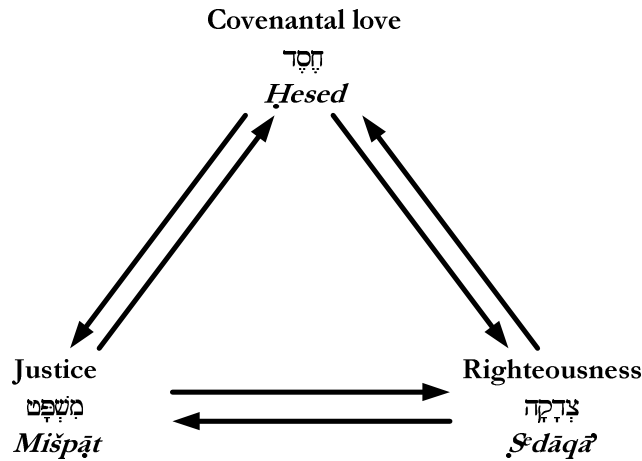
Consequently no ecclesiology can stand on its own feet. The doctrine of the church must, as it were, evolve of itself from christology and eschatology, that is, from insight into the Trinitarian history of God's dealings with the world. This means that the question 'What is the church?' cannot be answered by a definition which pegs out the limits dividing the phenomenon 'church' from other phenomena, determining it by a process of demarcation. We therefore ask about the relations in which what deserves to be called the church comes about and is to be expected ...¹³²

The church, in this view, can lay no claim to high ground because of its status as God's elect because it recognizes itself as "at the same time *congregatio sanctorum* and *congregatio peccatorum* ..."¹³³ But before the church can act authentically as such a conduit, it is called to exhibit the righteousness of God in its own midst.

Mays' observations regarding the relationship of *mišpat* to *ṣḏāqā* and the relationship of both to *ḥesed* suggest a model of relationship in the church that holds potential for revitalizing dialogue in the church regarding reconciliation. The relationship Mays describes is suggestive of an Hegelian triad as seen in the diagram below. In this triad, justice and righteousness can be seen to be in dialectical tension with each other. The resolution of this tension exists in the overarching principle of covenantal love expressed in a community.

¹³² Jürgen Moltmann, *The Church in the Power of the Spirit: A Contribution to Messianic Ecclesiology* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1977), 19-20.

¹³³ Ibid., 23.



Between individuals, such a relationship sounds vaguely reminiscent of a familiar story where two persons seek outside accountability to resolve the tension in their relationship:

Then Laban answered and said to Jacob, "The daughters are my daughters, the children are my children, the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do today about these daughters of mine, or about their children whom they have borne? Come now, let us make a covenant, you and I; and let it be a witness between you and me."

So Jacob took a stone, and set it up as a pillar. And Jacob said to his kinsfolk, "Gather stones," and they took stones, and made a heap; and they ate there by the heap. Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha: but Jacob called it Galeed. Laban said, "This heap is a witness between you and me today." Therefore he called it Galeed, and the pillar Mizpah, for he said, "The Lord watch between you and me, when we are absent one from the other. If you ill-treat my daughters, or if you take wives in addition to my daughters, though no one else is with us, remember that God is witness between you and me."

Then Laban said to Jacob, "See this heap and see the pillar, which I have set between you and me. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you, and you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. May the God of Abraham and the God of Nahor" the God of their father "judge between us." So Jacob swore by the Fear of his father Isaac, and Jacob offered a sacrifice on the height and called his kinsfolk to eat bread; and they ate bread and tarried all night in the hill country.

Early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them; then he departed and returned home. (Gen. 31:43-55 (NRSV))

This encounter between two persons bound together by little more than their distrust for one another finds visual expression in the diagram above. Each party relies on a mediator to vouchsafe the covenant sworn between the two. Neither Jacob nor Laban are able to trust each other, but they can rely upon a powerful God to ensure faithfulness to the covenant they are establishing. Similarly, any two individuals or any two communities of individuals in

tension with one another can be seen in such a dialectic. The resolution of the dialectical tension resides in the third party mediator who can secure the agreement for both parties.

The challenge that is faced in entering into such a covenantal arrangement when the third party is adopts a passive role in the covenant is how to bring the two parties into a conversation, if not an agreement initially. It is here that Paul, again writing to the church at Philippi, provides a critical insight, and it comes in the form of an admonition to adopt the mindset of Christ in the relationship. Moving on to other matters from his earlier discussions in chapter 1 of his letter to the Philippians, Paul appears to begin chapter 2 by addressing some previously unmentioned conflict in that church:¹³⁴

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:1-11, NSRV)

This passage is a veritable treasure trove for Christological speculation regarding the nature of Christ's incarnation,¹³⁵ but this, along with the attendant form critical speculation regarding the possible origin of the passage in early church hymnody¹³⁶ seem a distraction

¹³⁴ It is difficult to determine what Paul has in mind at this point because the shift between chapters and his line of reasoning from the previous chapter appears abrupt and rather oblique. Scholars have speculated regarding the underlying nature of this conflict, i.e., the disagreement between Euodia and Synteché mentioned in chapter 4? A reference to the seeds of dissent being sown by Judaizing elements mentioned in chapter 3?

¹³⁵ J. L. Houlden, *Paul's Letters from Prison: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon and Ephesians* (Harmondsworth; Penguin, 1970), 80-81.

¹³⁶ G. B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, in the Revised Standard Version, The New Clarendon Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 102-104.

from the point of the passage, which is clearly a further fleshing out of Paul's admonition to the church at Rome:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. (Rom. 12:1-3, NSRV)

The key consideration in both passages, so often missed in the rush to Christology in the case of the former or the rush to pneumatology in the case of the latter, is the active, intentional sacrifice of one's own right *to need* or to exist as a creature with needs alongside other creatures with like needs at the expense of the other. In the first case, the appeal is made based on the nature and character of the incarnate Christ. In the second case, the appeal is made based on a lengthy diatribe (eleven chapters) that essentially sums up the utter inability of humanity to exhibit the righteousness of God to which it is called and the need for the Christian to be identified through baptism with Christ's death if we are to know the power of his resurrection.

For the purpose of the covenantal conversation envisioned here, the focus is placed on the first case as explicated by Paul in Philippians 2. Underpinning Paul's admonition to sacrifice one's own needs in order to satisfy the needs of another is the image of the king of heaven, "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation" (Col. 1:15) who, having all the perquisites of deity and being the one by whom the world was spoken into existence, *set aside these rightful privileges*, not considering them to be powers for exploitation, and took on the shameful form of the lowliest person a Graeco-Roman reader could have imagined, the bondservant. The one who commanded the stormy sea into stillness became the exemplar of voluntary submission and obedience to the will of another. Paul sees this submission

carried forward to its ultimate expression in the willing sacrifice by Christ of his relationship to his Father, his willingness to die and experience complete separation from his Father as the penalty for the sin of the world.

To reduce such an act to a discussion of ontology is simply not to be serious about a matter of utmost seriousness for Christian praxis. The clearest defense of that understanding is none other than the example of the Lord himself in John 13. When faced with an absurd argument between his disciples regarding greatness in the kingdom of God,¹³⁷ absurd when considered in the presence of the only one in the room worthy of any greatness or glory, Christ's answer was not to reassert his own divine prerogatives, to point to the scriptures and explain how his divine pre-existence was necessary to fulfill all righteousness, or even to declare to them, "I am Yahweh; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols," (Is. 42:8, NIV) and thereby put the ridiculous argument to an end. Rather:

Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. (John 13:1-5, NIV)

Jesus instead gave his disciples the concrete example Paul implies in his letter to the Philippians, and some thirty or more years later, this is the image and mindset of Christ to which Paul appeals. It is also the mindset that will be required in any attempt to engage in the type of covenantal conversation envisioned in the diagram above. The mindset of Christ does not come naturally to human nature. This is certainly not to say that self-sacrifice is the

¹³⁷ Some attempts to harmonize the gospels would suggest that Jesus washes the feet of the disciples in response to the disagreement described in Luke 22:24-30 or the narrative of James and John wishing to occupy the places of honor next to Christ in the kingdom as depicted in Matthew 20:20-28 and Mark 10:35-45. (Cf. Kurt Aland, *Synopsis of the Four Gospels*, 7th ed. (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt, 1984), Burton Hamilton Throckmorton, *Gospel Parallels*, 4th ed. (Nashville: T. Nelson Inc., 1979).

sole province of Christians. In fact, significant community resources exist surrounding the concept of servant-leadership apart from the Christian faith, and it is never difficult to find instances of Christians failing to live up to their highest ideals.¹³⁸

Nonetheless, if Christians take seriously their theological heritage and much of its Pauline roots, they must acknowledge the need to adopt this mindset of Christ in both their dialogues with other Christians and non-Christians in order to overcome basic human tendencies towards self-preservation and self-exaltation. This is what must be overcome if trust is to develop in covenantal relationships. The church as a foretaste of community in the kingdom of God potentially has much to offer the world in which it exists in tension between the poles of Christ and culture. The covenantal, dialectical framework described above holds enormous potential for addressing distrust if one begins with the mindset Paul sets forth.

The primary conclusion of this chapter is that the gospel's fundamental shift in the relationship of power, if heeded by the church, could prove to be its singularly most significant contribution to dialogue in the public square. In a context such as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community, where such a high degree of racial mistrust coexists with a high degree of faith-based social capital, such a shift in the church's missional outlook and political strategy represents a significant departure from the dominant approach of

¹³⁸ Cf. Robert K. Greenleaf and Larry C. Spears, *Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness*, 25th anniversary ed. (New York: Paulist Press, 2002). Also, see Chrislip and Larson. Ironically, Greenleaf was influenced by having read Herman Hesse's *Journey to the East*. Hesse, in turn, was reared in a Pietist missionary family, and although he was deeply influenced by Eastern mystic philosophies, it would be difficult to argue that his pietist upbringing left him unacquainted with the Christian concept of a servant leader. (Cf. Encyclopædia Britannica Online, "Hesse, Hermann," <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9040287> (accessed August 8, 2007).)

evangelicalism. Furthermore, such a redefining of the church's political engagement paradigm could bridge differences in the polarized area of missional prioritization by establishing the defining aspect of this reprioritization as its kenotic character. Such a transformation cannot help but impact the church's witness in the world for the better. Even under circumstances of deep mistrust between differing parties, the church's witness of trust in covenantal faithfulness holds forth hope not only for its own conflict resolution but that of the broader world.

CHAPTER 4

LITERATURE REVIEW

A significant barrier facing Christians who bring their faith to bear on conversations in the public square has always been and continues to be the "foolishness" of the gospel when it encounters worldly wisdom. Paul wrote frequently of this stumblingblock, and it is to be expected that eventually the gospel will give some measure of offense to those who hear it apart from the ears of faith. However, significant differences exist between the contexts in which Paul wrote to the New Testament churches and the church today.

First, Paul's statements regarding relations between Christians and the world and between the church and the empire must always be considered in light of the early church's expectation of the imminent *parousia*, the return of Christ in glory. Paul's admonitions to the church such as those found in Romans 13 may carry some element of this expectation as background. As such, it is possible that they may be understood, at least in part, to suggest that Christians would not be expected to seek dramatic, near-term societal changes such as the freeing of slaves as opposed to merely changing the nature and character of these relationships in light of the gospel. With Christ's return expected almost any day, the focus of the church's mission would be reflected in its urgent proclamation of Christ's lordship and offer of salvation.

Second, Paul's letters were written at a time when the persecution the church was experiencing was but a shadow of that which was to come, and the relationship of the church to the empire and the intensity of that persecution would change dramatically in the

time between Paul's writing and Constantine's ascent. Needless to say, the church of the catacombs relates to the empire in a far different way than the church of St. Peter's basilica.

Thus, Augustine represents the next significant point of departure in the development of the church's theology and understanding of its relationship to the empire beyond of the scripture and the ante-Nicene patristic writers. In 410 C.E., the city of Rome was sacked by Alaric, and the glory that had been imperial Rome was now shown to be rotten to its core. The recriminations within the empire that followed were broad, and some came to blame the decline of Roman society that had precipitated its inglorious fall on the rise of Christianity and the offense it had given to the pagan gods who ushered in Rome's greatness. Others suggested that Christian doctrine had sapped the strength of the empire by turning citizens away from allegiance to the state.¹³⁹

In reaction to such suggestions made by Volusianus, the pagan Proconsul of Africa,¹⁴⁰ Marcellinus, a Commissioner of the Emperor Honorius to the Council of Carthage,¹⁴¹ wrote to his friend, Augustine, bishop of Hippo, in 412, urging him to compose a response.¹⁴² The result was Augustine's classic work, *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos—On the City of God against the Pagans*. Drawing upon his knowledge of the classic works of Graeco-Roman philosophers, Augustine mounted a defense to the effect that the greatness of Rome had been allowed by God for the furtherance of the gospel's proclamation, not as a sign of its favor in God's sight

¹³⁹ Augustine, *The City of God* (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1958), 16.

¹⁴⁰ Warren Thomas Smith, *Augustine, His Life and Thought* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1980), 148.

¹⁴¹ Augustine, 39, Smith, *Augustine, His Life and Thought*, 148.

¹⁴² Augustine, 17.

based on its conduct. Having accomplished this purpose, Rome's glory days were now at an end, a natural consequence of its conduct. He pointed to the failure of the pagan gods to deliver their worshippers from calamity and defeat quite apart from the presence of Christians in their midst for centuries. From this view, the Catholic Church was the real power in Augustine's world and the one hope for humanity.¹⁴³

Augustine's formulation was direct—there were two "cities," two communities represented in this context, the *civitas Dei*, the "City of God," and the *civitas diaboli*, literally, the "city of the devil," or the "city of man," as some would render it. These communities represented the spiritual inclinations of their "citizens," one towards the vision of the New Jerusalem for which the people of God had hoped for centuries, the other towards the desires of the flesh. While much of the argument presented early in *The City of God* does not bear directly on matters of political engagement undertaken herein, the concept of two spheres of influence within which human affairs are conducted, each with its attendant loyalties and composed of a fluid composition, eventually develops in this work to expand into broader considerations than whether or not Christians are responsible for the fall of Rome.¹⁴⁴ Some of Augustine's message is reflective of Paul's, a view of dual allegiances to two cities in which Christians live

¹⁴³ Smith, *Augustine, His Life and Thought*, 147.

¹⁴⁴ Augustine, 8. In the foreword, Etienne Gilson notes:

The first ten books of the *City of God* constitute the answer to this charge [that Christianity had sapped the strength of the Empire]. Augustine is there concerned to show that the greatness that was Rome's was not due to the "old" religion of pagan polytheism ...

... It is in the tenth book that Augustine begins to expound the world view of Christianity and to contrast it with paganism. In a sense he rises above the theme set by Marcellinus and argues that the breakdown of the Empire is but a small event in world history, viewed from the perspective of eternity. Books XI to XXII offer a positive interpretation of human society, in which the protagonists are not Rome and its enemies but two radically different cities ...

in this world, and yet neither of them being wholly of this world—"There is one, readily visible pattern for the earthly city, marked by disasters and wars, public and private, of every kind; but there is another pattern, dimly visible but obscured by sin, according to which the heavenly city lives ..."¹⁴⁵

In Book XIV, Augustine's construction of the dialectic between the City of God and the city of man begins in earnest, marking God's two purposes in deriving all men from one man, namely, "... to give unity to the human race by the likeness of nature ..." and "to bind mankind by the bond of peace, through blood relationship, into one harmonious whole ..."¹⁴⁶ However, because of the effect of sin, "there exist no more than two kinds of society, which, according to our Scriptures, we have rightly called the two cities."

One city is that of men who live according to the flesh. The other is of men who live according to the spirit. Each of them chooses its own kind of peace and, when they attain what they desire, each lives in the peace of its own choosing.¹⁴⁷

Augustine draws a very Pauline distinction between flesh and spirit reflected, not in a physical distinction, but rather in a difference in desires and wills—"When a man lives 'according to man' and not 'according to God' he is like the Devil ... When man lives according to himself, that is to say, according to human ways and not according to God's will, then surely he lives according to falsehood ..."¹⁴⁸ This leads Augustine to draw a distinction between the two cities as based on the two *loves* that characterize them.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ James J. O'Donnell, *Augustine, City of God*, <http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/jod/augustine/civ.html> (accessed August 25, 2007).

¹⁴⁶ Augustine, 295.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 299-301.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 321-322.

This construct of two cities proves useful in understanding the dynamics and motivations, not of a superior and an inferior group of people, but of two peoples differently motivated and thus differently focused towards different ends. Furthermore, it suggests a very different approach to the dynamic of politics as the maintenance of power relationships. Therein Augustine poses the challenge that faces any who would seek consensus, namely, that when the value systems of persons seeking consensus are directly in conflict with one another, resolution of that conflict cannot be based strictly on mutual sacrifice and forbearance. Inherent to such interactions will often be some measure of suspicion, some measure of mistrust that must be overcome because of the tendency of the unchecked human will towards the domination of the will of the other, the attainment of some advantage over the other, in short, the failure to see oneself in the other. It is often seen in the interpersonal dynamics between two people set apart to relate to one another, who often are able to overcome the prejudices and even the hatreds of groups between each other, but must first overcome these predispositions.¹⁵⁰

Yet, although individuals may come to such resolutions on a one-on-one basis, the task facing much larger societal groups is far more daunting. Such is the observation of Reinhold Niebuhr in *Moral Man and Immoral Society*. Niebuhr's thesis is spelled out literally from the beginning in his Introduction as he draws "... a sharp distinction ... between the moral and social behavior of individuals and of social groups, national, racial, and economic ..."

¹⁵⁰ Cf. "Joe Martin, 1940-2006 - ; 'He was a great example for all of us'; Banker, Social Activist, ALS Patient Pushed for Tolerance, Dignity," *Charlotte Observer, The (NC)* 2006. Jim Martin's brother, Joe, was a Mecklenburg County civic leader in his own right, having served in many capacities at what was to become Bank of America and having served on the CMS Board of Education. Among his efforts to overcome racial division and mistrust in the Charlotte community was the creation of "Race Day," wherein he called for people in the business community to invite someone of a different race to lunch.

Individuals may be moral in that they are able to consider interests other than their own, but "human societies and social groups" have "... less reason to guide and to check impulse, less capacity for self-transcendence, less ability to comprehend the needs of others and therefore more unrestrained egoism ..."¹⁵¹

Niebuhr suggests that these group characteristics occur because rather than being moderated or dampened by the group, they are amplified instead.¹⁵² He addresses a number of characterizations and understandings of this phenomenon ranging from the understandings of educators and social scientists to those of religious idealists. While hewing to a seemingly Marxist understanding of class interest as the basis of his reasoning, he nonetheless finds a common error between them, apparently opting for a Hobbesian view instead, locating the source of the problem in group egoism and our failure to recognize its scope and reach.¹⁵³

In view of this tendency in society towards collective egoism, Niebuhr sets out to defend this proposition further as well as to develop methods for overcoming this societal flaw, judging them by two criteria:

1. Do they do justice to the moral resources and possibilities in human nature and provide for the exploitation of every latent moral capacity in man?
2. Do they take account of the limitations of human nature, particularly those which manifest themselves in man's collective behavior?¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society: A Study in Ethics and Politics* (New York: Scribner, 1960), xi-xii.

¹⁵² Ibid., xii.

¹⁵³ Ibid., xx. Niebuhr interestingly displays his characteristic neo-orthodox when he describes liberal Christianity (presumably in its 19th century, "social gospel" formulation) as having "... given itself to the illusion that all social relations are being brought progressively under 'the law of Christ.'" Cf. Niebuhr, xxi, xxiii.

¹⁵⁴ Niebuhr, xxiv-xxv. Niebuhr correctly notes that, "So persistent are the moralistic illusions about politics in the middle-class world, that any emphasis upon the second question will probably impress the average reader as unduly cynical ... In America our contemporary culture is still pretty firmly enmeshed in the illusions and sentimentalities of the Age of Reason."

Niebuhr correctly notes the cynical perspective with which he approaches these questions throughout this work.¹⁵⁵ However, as noted above, this seems a rather unmerited, Hobbesian outlook. The current fascination with post-modern anomie notwithstanding, if human beings are nothing more than advanced animals, and judgment truly has fled to brutish beasts as suggested by Shakespeare's Antony, then perhaps Niebuhr's starting point would have its merits. However, unless one aims to exclude any hope of appeal to the *imago Dei* common to every human being as a nexus for redemption and the restoration of that image in the righteousness of God, such a starting point seems unnecessarily pessimistic.¹⁵⁶ Yet, it may also be that Niebuhr, writing in 1932, merely foresaw the inevitable outcome of the 20th century's struggles with the "death of God" and Nietzsche's "triumph," hollow though it has been, in a world where humanity believes it has outgrown its need for transcendence.

Analyzing religious resources for individuals living in society, Niebuhr, contrasts rational and religious resources, pointing to the religious emphasis on love as the highest virtue in contrast to the rational emphasis on justice.¹⁵⁷ This leads Niebuhr to conclude that, "[Love] is therefore ethically purer than the justice which is prompted by reason."¹⁵⁸ While such a

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., xxv.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 21. Consider a statement such as the following by Niebuhr: "Society will probably never be sufficiently intelligent to bring all power under its control. The stupidity of the average man will permit the oligarch, whether economic or political, to hide his real purposes from the scrutiny of his fellows and to withdraw his activities from effective control." It is one thing to think such things in moments of disgust and despair. It is another thing entirely to say them in a serious theological work. "Christian realism" is no more "authentic" when so constituted than an equally oxymoronic "Christian nihilism."

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 57.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

basis for ethics opens possibilities for the individual, Niebuhr argues in an almost Feuerbachian manner that it tends towards loss for society as a whole.¹⁵⁹

Niebuhr points to a troubling consequence of religious resources that points to a significant limitation of Augustine's two cities when he notes that our yearning for the absolute obscures distinctions between good and evil, seeing evil solely as rebellion against God and the expression of self-will with the result that "... The injustices of society are placed into such sharp contrast with the absolute moral ideal, conceived by the individual conscience, that the religiously sensitised soul is tempted to despair of society."¹⁶⁰ This despair, in turn leads the religious idealist either to leave matters to take their natural course or to assume a greater influence than actually exists ... "He is tempted, in other words, either to defeatism or to sentimentality ..."¹⁶¹

Such a judgment on Niebuhr's part is certainly understandable in his historical context. Writing in the aftermath of World War I and western culture's disorientation and disillusionment arising from the horrors and inhumanity it had experienced (in spite of liberal Protestantism's self-assured, Hegelian belief in society's progress towards the Absolute), Niebuhr can be seen here to be far more concerned with addressing and perhaps even validating this sense of betrayal. Thus, Niebuhr's cynicism, indeed, his pessimism, must be filtered through that context and understood accordingly.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 63-64.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 67, 69-70.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 75-76, 78.

Taken together, this leads Niebuhr to conclude that religious resources for ethics are inadequate for the building of a just society.¹⁶² In the final analysis, recognizing that the "... conflict, which could be most briefly defined as the conflict between ethics and politics, is made inevitable by the double focus of the moral life,"¹⁶³ he chooses to leave his readers with the continuing tension between individual and societal morality.¹⁶⁴ Although he leaves the reader in the tension of the situation, nonetheless he points the way, after a fashion,¹⁶⁵ to a love that is self-sacrificing in the context of an intimate community—"... Love must strive for something purer than justice if it would attain justice."¹⁶⁶

There is a strong connection here to the consensus-based approach of the School Building Solutions Committee. In that case, a committee of thirty-five members, meeting in a context where "intimate and personal relations" could occur if an atmosphere of trust and respect could be established, might arguably be a place where transactions leading to justice could conceivably occur. And yet, what occurred is more or less what Niebuhr would have predicted. Assertion and counter-assertion occurred, rendering justice impossible and destroying the spirit of mutuality because the members did indeed estimate their personal advantages too carefully in many cases.

¹⁶² Ibid., 81-82.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 257.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 257-258.

¹⁶⁵ Indeed, it is difficult in view of his stated cynicism and general condemnation of both poles to tell exactly where Niebuhr pitches his tent. Cf. Jon Diefenthaler, *H. Richard Niebuhr: A Lifetime of Reflections on the Church and the World* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986), 44. Diefenthaler would suggest that Niebuhr considered justice to be more realistic than love. The author would not disagree, but then a simple turning of the page to the next chapter of *Moral Man and Immoral Society* seems just as likely to yield the inverse result.

¹⁶⁶ Niebuhr, 265-266.

Niebuhr concludes that humans will continue to live with their illusions, the most important of which is that perfect justice can be achieved. However, he still leaves the reader with the warning that only when this dangerous illusion is tempered by reason can it be useful, yet, only if that faculty of reason does not first destroy its partner.¹⁶⁷

Regardless of the manner in which one may receive Niebuhr's thesis, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* remains a work long on analysis and short on answers. Perhaps its singular contribution is its historical call to remember the admonition of John's gospel—"But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man." (John 2:24-25, NIV) To a people given to forgetting such admonitions far too easily, this book will always be a necessarily sober if not particularly pleasant reminder.

Reinhold Niebuhr's perhaps lesser known but possibly more influential younger brother, H. Richard Niebuhr, also contributed much to the 20th century discussion of the role of the Christian in the public square. As Diefenthaler notes about Richard's distinguished academic career, "... Looking back on the decade of the Great Depression, the younger Niebuhr recalled that, whereas his brother had assumed the responsibility to reform his culture, the 'special task' to which he felt called was the reformation of the church."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 277.

¹⁶⁸ Diefenthaler, xi.

It is interesting to note Richard's disagreement with Reinhold over the issue of pacifism prior to World War II that manifested itself in Richard's reaction to Japan's invasion of Manchuria. Diefenthaler shows how the two interacted and reacted to one another and to the liberal Protestantism in which they had come up. In particular, Richard eschewed Reinhold's dichotomy between individual and social ethics, and it may be suggested that Richard's influence in that respect shows up in Reinhold's later work, *The Nature and Destiny of Man*.¹⁶⁹

Although Richard Niebuhr's corpus is replete with works discussing Christian faith in society,¹⁷⁰ *Christ and Culture*¹⁷¹ and its typology exert a continuing influence over this conversation. Indeed, the fact that the book was reissued for its 50th anniversary, along with a staunch defense in the preface by his student, James Gustafson, speaks to its continuing vitality, as do the responses of its detractors. Based on his 1949 lectures at Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, *Christ and Culture*, written in 1951, frames the situation as "[a] many-sided debate about the relations of Christianity and civilization ... as confused as it is many-sided."¹⁷² Niebuhr points to a number of lines of attack taken by societies against the Christian faith and poses the challenge that the Christian faith faces in relation to them. Surprisingly, it is not the problem of defending the faith from these attacks. Here, he introduces his central notion that Christians do not face a choice between Christ or culture,

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 43-45.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: H. Holt and Company, 1929), H. Richard Niebuhr, Wilhelm Pauck, and Francis Pickens Miller, *The Church against the World* (New York: Willett, Clark,, 1935), microform, Helmut Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America* (Chicago, New York: Willett, Clark & company, 1937).

¹⁷¹ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper, 1951).

¹⁷² Ibid., 1-2.

but rather how they will resolve the dialectic between the two, for the two are not a problem in relationship to each other. Rather, the relationship itself is the problem.¹⁷³ He further defines the relationship between Christ and culture by clarifying his definition of culture—"...the 'artificial, secondary environment' which man superimposes on the natural. It comprises language, habits, ideas, beliefs, customs, social organization, inherited artifacts, technical processes, and values."¹⁷⁴

Niebuhr puts forth five paradigms that represent the manners in which Christians have traditionally adjudicated the tension between the poles of loyalty to Christ and loyalty to culture. The first type, *Christ-against-culture*, sees Christ and culture in opposition to one another and is typical of many Johannine and Anabaptist communities. The second, the *Christ-of-culture* type, sees a fundamental agreement between the two and would readily be identified with the Protestant liberal church with which both Niebuhrs took issue. The third type, *Christ-above-culture*, is a "synthetic" type best represented by Thomas Aquinas, who in seeing a hierarchical order with the church at the vertex, takes on much of the Christ of culture outlook while yet drawing a distinction between the two poles. The fourth group, *Christ-and-culture-in-paradox*, sees the polarity of the relationship but chooses not to seek to resolve the dialectic, choosing instead to live in the tension. Finally, Niebuhr characterizes the fifth type, *Christ transforming culture*, as a "conversionist" approach where "... Christ is seen as the converter of man in his culture and society, not apart from these, for there is no nature without culture and no turning of men from self and idols to God save in society."¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Ibid., 9-10, 11.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 32.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 40-45.

Niebuhr acknowledges the first type as common in the early church, particularly as evidenced in the Johannine corpus.¹⁷⁶ He also acknowledges that given the expectation of an imminent *parousia*, such a perspective had no motivation to develop a sophisticated view of the relationship of the Christian to the surrounding culture. It was seen to be a transitory concern in that light.¹⁷⁷ However, by the time of Tertullian, the divide associated with acknowledging the lordship of Christ over against the lordship of Caesar was more pronounced, with culture rather than nature being seen as the locus of sin. As a result, Tertullian saw political engagement as something to be avoided.¹⁷⁸ While he bypasses assessing the monastic movement, Niebuhr makes brief reference to Protestant sectarianism in the form of the Mennonites and the Society of Friends, as well as discussing Tolstoy at length, seeing "... their common acknowledgement of the sole authority of Jesus Christ and the common rejection of the prevailing culture ..." as their point of commonality.¹⁷⁹

As will be the case in each of the five types, Niebuhr recognizes the benefits of this motif. Such withdrawals make clear that there is, in fact, a "distinction between Christ and Caesar, between revelation and reason, between God's will and man's." However, he also sees the primary limitation in this type being that humanity cannot seriously consider itself fully

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 45-46.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 49.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 53-54. While it is not intended here to support such a withdrawal from public life, it is, nonetheless, affirmed that Tertullian seems to be very much on track in his understanding of political power in relation to the faith.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 64-65.

separated from the cultures in which it is born.¹⁸⁰ Niebuhr notes a number of ethical and theological issues with this motif as well. These include a false dichotomy between reason and revelation, identifying the former with culture and the latter with Christ;¹⁸¹ the nature and prevalence of sin and the relationship of law and grace;¹⁸² And "the problem of the relation of Jesus Christ to the Creator of nature and Governor of history as well as to the Spirit immanent in creation and in the Christian community."¹⁸³ But it is in praxis that the larger difficulty is encountered, namely, what Niebuhr characterizes as the perspective's "ontological bifurcation of reality," which effectively leads its adherents down a Manichean pathway.¹⁸⁴

Niebuhr next addresses the diametrical opposite of the Christ-against-culture type, the Christ-of-culture type. Although he initially equates the earliest expressions of this type with Gnosticism, particularly as expressed in the work of Abélard,¹⁸⁵ he progresses to its more mainstream, non-heretical expression in 19th century liberal Protestantism, or "culture Protestantism" as exemplified by Schleiermacher, Ritschl and Rauschenbusch. Speaking of Schleiermacher, he suggests that a significant problem with this perspective is that, "This Christ of religion does not call upon men to leave homes and kindred for his sake ..." ¹⁸⁶ It

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 66-67, 69.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 76-77.

¹⁸² Ibid., 78, 79.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 80-81.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 81.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 89.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 93.

is also clear from his analysis of Ritschl that he sees in him the origin of discussing the Christ-culture relationship in its polar form.¹⁸⁷

In defense of this type, Niebuhr notes that those who critique it often find themselves mimicking it.¹⁸⁸ However, he also notes its deficiencies. To begin with, for all its efforts to garner friends among its "cultured despisers," such Christianity does not appear any more successful than its opposite, particularly in view of what it sacrifices.¹⁸⁹

From this type, Niebuhr moves on to discuss what he terms "the church of the center."¹⁹⁰ In this case he refers to that "synthetic" type of Christianity represented by Roman Catholicism, particularly as expressed by Thomas Aquinas.^{191, 192} Rather than the "either-or" of the first two types, the synthesist, as in the case of Aquinas, opts for a "both-and" instead.¹⁹³ Of the benefits of this type, Niebuhr notes that the synthetic solution indeed has the appeal of offering a unified, "theory of everything," much as physicists seek today,¹⁹⁴ but having acknowledged a burden of debt to the synthesist solution, Niebuhr notes its limitations, primarily its tendency to absolutize what is relative—"It is one thing to assert that there is a

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 95.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 101-102.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 108.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 116.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 120.

¹⁹² Ibid., 120-121.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 129.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 141, 143.

law of God inscribed in the very structure of the creature, who must seek to know this law by the use of his reason and govern himself accordingly; it is another thing to formulate the law in the language and concepts of a reason that is always culturally conditioned."¹⁹⁵

Niebuhr characterizes the third group as "dualist," although not in the Manichaeian sense, and he seeks to explain their perspective as an internal existential conflict.¹⁹⁶ Thus, he sees this position as inherently paradoxical—"... the dualist knows that he belongs to that culture and cannot get out of it, that God indeed sustains him in it and by it; for if God in His grace did not sustain the world in its sin it would not exist for a moment." This leads the dualist to affirm, not one or the other, but both/and, at the same time.¹⁹⁷

Recognizing the dualistic elements in Paul, Marcion, Augustine, Luther and Kierkegaard, Niebuhr again addresses the merits and deficits of the type, noting the reality that Christians really do live "between the times," and that this bears with it an inherent, paradoxical tension. However, for Niebuhr, this duality tends not towards a true duality but rather, something that looks a great deal like the rejection of culture of the radical approach—"... There seems to be a tendency in dualism, as represented by both Paul and Luther, to relate temporality or finiteness to sin in such a degree as to move creation and fall into very close proximity, and in that connection to do less than justice to the creative work of God."¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 144-145, 147, 148.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 149-150.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 155-157.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 185-187, 188-189.

This brings Niebuhr to his fifth and final type, "Christ the transformer of culture." As compared to what he terms the "radical," "cultural," "synthesist" and "dualist" modes of addressing Christ and culture, Niebuhr refers to this type as "conversionist." To Niebuhr, this conversionist motif "... [belongs] to the great central tradition of the church," and indeed, Niebuhr sets about to show how conversionists represent, in some manner, elements of the radical, synthesist, dualist and cultural Christian types.¹⁹⁹

Niebuhr considers this type "closely akin to dualism," yet distinct—"What distinguishes conversionists from dualists is their more positive and hopeful attitude toward culture." Niebuhr sees this exhibited in three theological distinctives, the first being the conversionists' understanding of the doctrine of creation; second, their related understanding of the nature of the fall from "created goodness;" and third, "a view of history that holds that to God all things are possible in a history that is fundamentally not a course of merely human events but always a dramatic interaction between God and men."²⁰⁰ Oddly, while Niebuhr began by pointing to John's radical inclinations, he now points to the conversionist elements of John's writings²⁰¹—"We are prevented from interpreting the Fourth Gospel as a wholly conversionist document, not only by its silence on many subjects but also by the fact that its universalistic note is accompanied by a particularist tendency."

Niebuhr, in addressing the conversionist aspects of Augustine's theology, sees Augustine beginning with a sense of the creation as good but then as a consequence of sin becoming

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 190.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 190, 191, 193, 194.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 202.

corrupt and disordered.²⁰² From this, he traces social sinfulness as a consequence of personal sinfulness, with its attendant effects on culture,²⁰³ but then he shows how, in turn, God converts society through the conversion of individuals.²⁰⁴ He describes how Augustine saw this conversion occurring through the redemption of reason, and how "Everything, and not least the political life, is subject to the great conversion that ensues when God makes a new beginning for man by causing man to begin with God."²⁰⁵ Niebuhr draws parallels to Augustine in the work of Calvin and of the English theologian, F. D. Maurice. He then completes his study with a "concluding unscientific postscript," borrowing a phrase from the title of Kierkegaard's book. He acknowledges that "...[this] study could be interminably and fruitfully continued by multiplying types and subtypes, *motifs* and *countermotifs*, for the purpose of bringing conceptual patterns and historical realities into closer relations, or reducing the haze of uncertainty that surrounds every effort to analyze form in the manifold richness of historical life, of drawing sharper boundaries between the interfusing, interacting thoughts and deeds of separate men."²⁰⁶

Addressing the existentialism of his day,²⁰⁷ Niebuhr points out that even when one engages in a "critical present decision of loyalty and disloyalty to Christ in the midst of his cultural

²⁰² Ibid., 209, 210, 211.

²⁰³ Ibid., 212.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 214.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 214, 215.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 230, 231.

²⁰⁷ Much of the neo-orthodoxy of the day represented a recasting of the Christian faith in an existentialist philosophical framework.

tasks [it] is always such a historical decision."²⁰⁸ Niebuhr thus leaves us in a context of faith, but faith that is experienced in community, particularly in a community located in history.²⁰⁹ It is unfortunate that, to some degree, in his advocacy of the conversionist mode Niebuhr does not offer much in the way of a critique of its approach in *Christ and Culture*. However, in the half century since its publication a number of theologians and writers have undertaken to fill this gap.

Chief among these in recent times have been Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon in their book, *Resident Aliens*. It is ironic, in view of the influence of Paul's letter to the Philippians in Chapter 2 of this thesis, that Hauerwas and Willimon should have placed Philippians 2:5-11 and 3:20-21 on the frontispiece of the book and to have begun its preface was a discussion of these passages.²¹⁰ Beginning with the experience of residents of Greenville, South Carolina in 1963 when the so-called "blue laws" of that state came to be challenged with the Sunday opening of a movie theater, Hauerwas and Willimon describe the secular shift of American culture in the latter half of the 20th century,²¹¹ suggesting that the church has been involved largely in an effort to frame its theology in apologetic terms²¹² and that this effort has been a mistake.²¹³

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 248.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 256.

²¹⁰ Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 11.

²¹¹ Ibid., 15-17.

²¹² Ibid., 19.

²¹³ Ibid., 21.

For Hauerwas and Willimon, coming to the Christian faith is less a matter of a *metanoia* of *gnosis* than perhaps of *psyche*—"The challenge is not the intellectual one but the political one—the creation of a new people who have aligned themselves with the seismic shift that has occurred in the world since Christ."²¹⁴ They see that the legacy of 19th century Protestant liberalism typified by Niebuhr's "Christ-of-culture" was its inability to speak out against the excesses of fascism and other totalitarian movements of the 20th century because by refusing to take Jesus seriously as the gospels present him, a flesh and blood Jew, and by substituting instead a liberal "Christ-the-highest-in-humanity," it was in no position to distinguish him from a Nazi *ubermensch*.²¹⁵

Such compromises are typical, in their view, of the moral choices that the church has made, moving from its shock and indignation at Franco's bombing of Guernica and the Japanese rape of Nanking prior to World War II to its seeming acquiescence to the subsequent fire bombings and atomic bombings—"Alas, in leaning over to speak to the modern world, we had fallen in. We had lost the theological resources to resist, lost the resources even to see that there was something worth resisting."²¹⁶ Thus, Hauerwas and Willimon state the goal of their book as "... [challenging] those assumptions [of modernity] and [showing] what a marvelous opportunity awaits those pastors and laity who sense what an adventure it is to be

²¹⁴ Ibid., 24.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 25.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 27.

the church, people who reside here and now, but who live here as aliens, people who know that, while we live here, 'our commonwealth is in heaven.'"²¹⁷

From here, Hauerwas and Willimon moved into a discussion of Christian politics, and it is here at this point where their basic disagreement with both of the Niebuhrs begins—"... we will challenge the assumption, so prevalent at least since Constantine, that the church is judged politically by how well or ill the church's presence in the world works to be advantage of the world."²¹⁸ While many in the church believe that Christians should bring their faith to the public square to work for the benefit of the world, Hauerwas and Willimon take an opposing position, namely that in so doing the Constantinian church is "accommodationist" and uncritical of the surrounding culture,²¹⁹ resulting in an underlying atheism at the core of the Christian political agenda:

... Our problem is not how to make the Christian faith credible to the modern world. Yet in another sense, unbelief or atheism is a problem, not intellectually, but *politically*. Most of our social activism is formed on the presumption that God is superfluous to the formation of a world of peace with justice.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 29.

²¹⁸ Ibid., 30, 76. With regard to Reinhold Niebuhr, Hauerwas and Willimon write:

Or we say, "The Sermon on the Mount is intended for individuals, heroic ethical superstars. Saints. It was never meant to be embodied in social structures." Most of us first had this point of view articulated by Reinhold Niebuhr in his book *Moral Men [sic] and Immoral Society* ... Niebuhr's argument, in brief, was at best, Jesus' ethics apply most directly to the individual relations between two persons. When we join together in groups, a more realistic, practical approach is required, one that takes into account the nature of human beings in society. Jesus may have talked about loving our enemies, but we more sophisticated modern people know the impracticality of such love when applied to the complicated social questions of our day. So we work for justice, which, Niebuhr said, is a kind of embody, realistic, socially applicable form of Jesus' simpler, more individual love. Fortunately, justice is something good to work for, because even though sophisticated modern people who know nothing of the claim that God "makes his sun to shine on the just and the unjust, his rain to fall upon the good and the bad," do believe in justice.

Unfortunately, such reasoning is yet another example of the sort of theological rationalization so typical of the post-Constantinian church. The Sermon on the Mount is after something that Niebuhr, and most of the modern church, forsook—that is, the formation of a visible, practical, Christian community.

²¹⁹ Ibid., 32.

Fortunately, we are powerful people who, because we live in a democracy, are free to use our power. It is all up to us ...

We argue that the political task of Christians is to be the church rather than to transform the world.²²⁰

Hauerwas and Willimon then segue from this into their disagreement with Niebuhr in *Christ and Culture*. They mince no words here—"We have come to believe that few books have been a greater hindrance to an accurate assessment of our situation than *Christ and Culture*. Niebuhr rightly saw that our politics determines our theology."²²¹ They acknowledge that he was right not to reject "culture," but they believe that to accept "culture" and politics in the name of the unity of God's creating and redeeming activity "had the effect of endorsing a Constantinian social strategy." They go even further by essentially accusing Niebuhr of priming the pump in such a manner that one could not help but agree with his conclusion—"Thus Niebuhr set up the argument as if a world-affirming 'church' or world-denying 'sect' were only options, as if these categories were a faithful depiction of some historical or sociological reality in the first place ... *Christ and Culture* thus stands as a prime example of repressive tolerance ..."²²²

Hauerwas and Willimon say a good many things about church and society, many of which are unarguably correct, but the glaring inadequacy of *Resident Aliens* is its treatment of Niebuhr and *Christ and Culture*. Were *Christ and Culture* to stand alone on its own merits as representative of Niebuhr's thought, perhaps Hauerwas and Willimon's point of view would be somewhat accurate and well-taken. However, it does not (and should not) and thus, theirs

²²⁰ Ibid., 36, 37, 38.

²²¹ Ibid., 40.

²²² Ibid.

is not. They very legitimately point to issues of Niebuhr's rhetorical style when they essentially accuse him of setting up an argument he could not lose. This has been noted above as well when discussing the lack of critique of the conversionist type in *Christ and Culture*. However, one might consider that Niebuhr, in converting a lecture series into a book, perhaps neglected to consider the reader as a partner in dialogue, an approach that might have lent itself more to the rhetorical form of diatribe rather than monologue.

Nonetheless, to read into *Christ and Culture* what Hauerwas and Willimon see as a ringing endorsement of the agenda of 19th century cultural Protestantism is not to take seriously the position of either of the Niebuhr brothers in their neo-orthodox reaction to cultural Protestantism. Furthermore, to interpret Richard Niebuhr solely on the basis of *Christ and Culture* and thus to label him an accommodator and worse, an enabler of western culture's lesser angels is highly questionable. To do so is to hold him accountable for the action or inaction of others using his theology as an excuse for theological laziness.

Hauerwas and Willimon's characterization of Niebuhr is simply inconsistent with the larger body of Niebuhr's work. How can one explain the position espoused by them in light of *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture*,²²³ where Niebuhr compares polytheism, henotheism and monotheism and sadly concludes that most of what passes for Christian monotheism is in fact henotheism? How can one explain their position when he then calls for a new, radical monotheism that "dethrones all absolutes short of the principle of being itself ..." and holds as its two great mottos, "I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt have no other gods

²²³ H. Richard Niebuhr, *Radical Monotheism and Western Culture, With Supplementary Essays* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960).

before me" and the Augustinian "Whatever is, is good," meaning by this, not that whatever is, is right as well? How can one explain their position in light of *The Responsible Self*,²²⁴ where Niebuhr proposed the "responsibilist" alternative to deontological (rules-based) ethics such as Hauerwas and Willimon advocate or teleological (ends-based) ethics, namely bringing to mind that God is acting in all actions upon a person and therefore acting so as to respond to that action? How can one explain their position in light of *Faith on Earth*,²²⁵ Niebuhr's final book, published posthumously, in which Niebuhr questions whether, when the Son of Man returns, he will find faithfulness on earth? In short, one cannot reconcile this conclusion with Niebuhr's broader corpus.

Such sectarianism takes the basic form of, "The world is thus, and it ought to be different." The logical extension of that thought is, "And, by God, if I were in charge, it *would* be!" The chief sin in the eyes of the Reformed tradition, hearkening back to its Augustinian roots, is pride, the desire to make the world as *we* would have it rather than the way in which God has given it to us, and that is the basic problem the tradition has with sectarianism. The overarching conclusion to be made here is that in choosing sectarianism, the church chooses a worldview that makes evangelism and cultural engagement a much harder task. How does one convince people of God's love for them when all they hear is its condemnation? Furthermore, such condemnation fails to consider Augustine's characterization of the natural human state since the fall as *non posse non peccare* rather than our condition in Christ of *posse*

²²⁴ H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self: An Essay in Christian Moral Philosophy*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

²²⁵ H. Richard Niebuhr and Richard R. Niebuhr, *Faith on Earth: An Inquiry into the Structure of Human Faith* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989).

non peccare. In other words, we condemn as sinners people who have no other option but to be what they are.

Christians can certainly walk away from such an encounter shaking the biblical dust from their sandals and feeling a certain sense of their own correctness, but have they in fact advanced the kingdom of God and the righteousness of God in the process? One may see in this approach more of a nascent neo-Pharisaism than of a faithful response to both elements of Christ's great commandment. In such an attempt to honor the holiness of God, one fails both to love God with all of one's heart, soul, mind and strength or to love of one's neighbor as oneself. One cannot love God in spirit and truth and yet fail to see oneself in one's neighbor or one's neighbor in oneself.

Hauerwas and Willimon opt instead for the categories of John Howard Yoder addressed in "A People in the World: Theological Interpretation."²²⁶ According to them, "Yoder distinguishes between the *activist* church ("... more concerned with the building of a better society than with the reformation of the church"), the *conversionist* church ("Because this church works only for inward change, it has no alternative social ethic or social structure of its own to offer the world."), and the *confessing* church ("... the confessing church finds its main political task to light, not in the personal transformation of individual hearts or the modification of society, but rather in the congregation's determination to worship Christ in all things.")²²⁷

²²⁶ *The Concept of the Believer's Church: Addresses from the 1967 Louisville Conference*, ed. James Leo Garrett (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1969).

²²⁷ Hauerwas and Willimon, 44-45.

As noted above, Niebuhr certainly would not have objected to competing sets of categories.

Yoder's "confessing church" bears some resemblance to George Lindbeck's later call for retrenchment in the church.²²⁸ Hauerwas and Willimon make a key distinction, however, that is helpful for the evaluation of the School Building Solutions Committee's work:

We might be tempted to say that *faithfulness* rather than *effectiveness* is the goal of a confessing church. Yet we believe this is a false alternative. Few of us would admit to holding an ecclesiology that believes in either faithfulness regardless of costs or results, or effectiveness that is purely pragmatic. The person who says, "The church must give up some of its principles in order to have a more significant impact on society," is still claiming that the goal of influencing society is a worthy principle. "Effectiveness" usually means that I have selected one principle as being more important than others ...

The overriding political task of the churches to be the community of the cross.²²⁹

Hauerwas and Willimon make a significant and important distinction here. By drawing this distinction between faithfulness and effectiveness and questioning the place of effectiveness in the church's self-assessment, they provide a much needed corrective to the contemporary church's navel-gazing and consumerist mindset. However, just as Niebuhr's categories are not intended to provide an excuse for theological laziness, neither should Hauerwas and Willimon's questioning of effectiveness as an appropriate church metric be taken as a license to remain fixated on failure for Jesus' sake.

The church may in fact become an effective witness for Christ within its own walls as a community of alternative values, but apart from establishing a monastic, communal utopia where the basic needs of food and shelter are met for her members, at some point Christians

²²⁸ George A. Lindbeck, *The Nature of Doctrine: Religion and Theology in a Postliberal Age*, 1st ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1984), 134. Lindbeck argues for what he calls "intratextuality." That is to say, the approach Lindbeck favors in a context such as the present one may be seen as a strategic retreat in the face of the church's decline with respect to the culture. The purpose of this retreat would be the reformulation of doctrine and re-education of the church in its own language.

²²⁹ Hauerwas and Willimon, 46.

face the reality of having to leave the mountaintop and reenter the world outside the walls. When they begin that sojourn, they will need to understand how to translate these alternative values into the *lingua franca* of the marketplace, and a countercultural predisposition without a realistic appraisal of human finitude and fallibility invariably degenerates into self-righteousness. What is left at that point is, as the phrase would have it, a church community that is so heavenly minded that it is no earthly good.

For Hauerwas and Willimon to suggest that the church is not in the world to be of earthly good brings us no closer to knowing how one conducts one's *politeuma* as a citizen of both worlds. It ignores the possibility that God is working through a Joseph, a Nehemiah, or a Daniel in the court of the pharaoh or the king or a Paul speaking in the Acropolis as faithfully as Jesus preaching the Sermon on the Mount or cleansing the Temple. There is a conversation we have within our own walls; there is another conversation we must be prepared to have outside those walls, and while the New Testament certainly exalts the values of the kingdom over those of the empire, at no point does it suggest that the emperor has no authority whatsoever, regardless of the state of his clothing. The emperor and the values of the empire may indeed be wrong, but discernment of that condition necessitates an active conversation with them.

In *The Politics of Jesus*, John Howard Yoder undertakes two tasks:

1. To "attempt to sketch an understanding of Jesus and his ministry of which it might be said that such a Jesus would be a direct significance for social ethics."

2. To "state the case for considering Jesus, when thus understood, to be not only relevant but also normative for a contemporary Christian social ethic."

Yoder sets out to exegete Luke's gospel in order to make his case to "the modern ethicists who have assumed that the only way to get from the gospel story to ethics, from Bethlehem to Rome or to Washington or Saigon, was to leave the story behind."²³⁰ This exegesis begins with the messianic expectation of the early parts of the gospel²³¹ and proceeds through Jesus' life and ministry, noting along the way Jesus' challenges of the established order. He notes the inherent political nature of the kingdom of God by virtue of the term²³² and argues throughout that the kingdom Jesus proclaimed was not merely symbolic but a political reality in a concrete place and time as well. Whether in the form of Jesus' proclamation of the Jubilee in the Capernaum synagogue or his response in Luke 22 to his disciples seeking greatness in the kingdom, Yoder notes that:

In none of the accounts where this word is reported does Jesus reprimand his disciples for expecting him to establish some new social order, as he would have had to if the thesis of the only-spiritual kingdom were to prevail. He rather reprimands them for having misunderstood the character of that new social order which he does intend to set up. The novelty of its character is not that it is not social, or not visible, but that it is marked by an alternative to accepted patterns of leadership. The alternative to how the kings of the earth rule is not "spirituality" but servanthood.²³³

As Jesus nears the time of his passion, Yoder sees a political dimension in every encounter, whether in his response to the question of the denarius²³⁴ or in his political exegesis of Jesus'

²³⁰ John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1972), 23, 25.

²³¹ Ibid., 26-30.

²³² Ibid., 34.

²³³ Ibid., 46-47.

²³⁴ Ibid., 52-53.

trial, crucifixion and resurrection, leading him to conclude, put simply, that Jesus said what he meant and meant what he said:

... Jesus was not just a moralist whose teachings had some political implications ... Jesus was, in his divinely mandated (i.e. promised, anointed, messianic) prophethood, priesthood, and kingship, the bearer of a new possibility of human, social, and therefore political relationships. His baptism is the inauguration and his cross is the culmination of that new regime in which his disciples are called to share. Men may choose to consider that kingdom as not real, or not relevant, or not possible, or not inviting; but no longer may we come to this choice in the name of systematic theology or honest hermeneutics ... No such slicing can avoid his call to an ethic marked by the cross, a cross identified as the punishment of a man who threatened society by creating a new kind of community leading a radically new kind of life.²³⁵

Yoder moves through a pattern of demonstrating Jesus' expectation for the literal enactment of jubilee; the rejection of violence and reliance upon God to fight the nation's battles, literally and figuratively in God's Old Testament interventions; and appealing to nonviolent resistance as a means of challenging civic authority. In short, it is clear that Yoder believed that Jesus meant what he said, literally. However, Yoder suggests that the point at which we are called to imitate Jesus is singular in its focus—in his cross, seen as "the price of his social nonconformity."²³⁶ This understanding of the cross as the price paid for non-conformance with the social order leads Yoder to the kenotic Christ hymn of Philippians 2, wherein the cross again becomes the focal point of self-denial.²³⁷ For Yoder, it is only in the cross that we are called to imitation of Jesus.²³⁸

In discussing the relationship of Christ to power, Yoder recognizes that even in their fallen state the powers of this world continue to exercise an ordering function.²³⁹ In relation to

²³⁵ Ibid., 62-63.

²³⁶ Ibid., 97.

²³⁷ Ibid., 125.

²³⁸ Ibid., 134.

²³⁹ Ibid., 143-144.

Christ and his work, Yoder sees that humanity has been subjected to these rebellious powers, but what Christ accomplishes is the salvation of humanity by the breaking of their sovereignty.²⁴⁰ Yoder concludes then that the task of the church is to proclaim this victory of Christ over the powers. Based on his reading of the Hendrik Berkhof's systematic theology, he concludes that it would be a mistake to see the early church as withdrawing in the face of social issues based on "her weakness, by her numerical insignificance or low social class, or by fear of persecution, or by scrupulous concern to remain uncontaminated by the world."²⁴¹ Looking at the use of the phrase "responsible society" in the work of the Amsterdam Assembly of 1948 as an example, Yoder shows how the ecumenical conversation on social attitudes has more or less avoided the temptations of the Pharisees, but instead it may have fallen into the trap of the Sadducees.²⁴²

In other words, Yoder undercuts the political strategy of nearly 1,800 years of Constantinianism, to wit, if Christians were simply able to gain control of the apparatus of state, they would be able to usher in the kingdom of God on earth. Yoder cautions against what he terms the two "pietistic" misunderstandings, namely, the belief that "the gospel deals only with personal ethics and not with social structures ..." and that "... the only way to change structures is to change the heart of an individual man, preferably the man in power, and then to see that he exercises his control of society with more humility or discernment or according to better standards."²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 148.

²⁴¹ Ibid., 151.

²⁴² Ibid., 156.

²⁴³ Ibid., 157.

As Yoder examines the New Testament *Haustafeln* ("household precepts"),²⁴⁴ or otherwise stated, the rules of the house, and their roots in stoicism,²⁴⁵ his understanding of the network of the various submissive relationships contained therein leads him to see a broader pattern of mutual submission extended out into society at large.²⁴⁶ In this sense, he understands Paul's admonition in Romans 13 to be a call to a similar voluntary submission to the governing powers.²⁴⁷ Yoder notes the Calvinistic understanding that "[what] is ordained is not a particular government but the concept of proper government, the principle of government as such." However, he notes the internal shortcoming of this perspective in determining "how bad a government can be and still be good." He also notes the fact that Romans 13 does not justify rebellion against an improper government, and that the meaning of this text is not to call the church to revolution or insubordination but to nonresistance.²⁴⁸

Yoder's final conclusion is that:

A social style characterized by the creation of a new community and the rejection of violence of any kind is the theme of New Testament proclamation from beginning to end, from right to left. The cross of Christ is the model of Christian social efficacy, the power of God for those who believe.

Vicit agnus noster, eum sequamur.
Our Lamb has conquered; him let us follow.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 163.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 178.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 181-182.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 197-198.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 201-202, 204.

Yoder's is a consistently argued theme and ethic. It appeals to the contemporary Christian who would look at the institutional church and despair.²⁴⁹ It provides a simple enough reason for the church's seeming impotence to effect change in the world in which it ministers—the church is not faithful to her Lord. It has created yet another idol and dances merrily around the Mount Carmel altar with the priests of Ba'al. However, like Hauerwas and Willimon, so deeply influenced by him, Yoder's Christian community seems aloof and insular. *Resident Aliens* and *The Politics of Jesus* are indeed the manifesto of a revolutionary community, but the ever present danger in the quixotic revolution of the true believer is that of being blinded to one's own finitude and fallibility. How can one faithfully engage in dialogue with the other and seek the consensus that may be necessary to move a diverse community forward in humility when one's default state and starting point is that the other is fundamentally wrong?

It is necessary to understand the cultural and historical context in which Christians in the United States find themselves today in order to comprehend their role in the public square going forward. James Davison Hunter describes three successive waves of conservative Protestant political engagement around social and moral issues. The first wave occurred in the early part of the 20th century, reaching its peak in the 1920s and directed at three issues, anti-evolutionism, Prohibition and anti-Catholicism.²⁵⁰ This wave had a largely negative outcome for such activism in the eyes of the broader culture.²⁵¹

²⁴⁹ The significant and continuing "emerging church" conversation that has arisen in recent years as a post-modern deconstruction of ecclesiology would suggest that, as in the time of Yoder's writing, a significant audience exists for his views.

²⁵⁰ James Davison Hunter, *Evangelicalism: The Coming Generation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 117.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

The second wave in the 1950s saw "the unqualified participation on the part of certain sectors of conservative Protestantism in the campaign against alleged communist infiltration into the United States and her government."²⁵² To a large degree, these efforts were discredited in parallel with the broader anti-communist efforts associated with McCarthyism.²⁵³ However, Hunter notes that a lack of broader support in conservative Protestantism for such activism limited the degree to which these efforts resulted in negative perceptions of the group, particularly as such congregations tended to muzzle the activism of their clergy as well.²⁵⁴

The third wave, occurring in the 1980s, has significantly affected the present day context. Following on the heels of the tumultuous 1960s and 1970s, this wave was directed at "stemming the tide of moral decline in American culture."²⁵⁵ Focused largely on moral issues such as abortion, the role of women, homosexuality and school prayer,²⁵⁶ this wave identified a new philosophical enemy in the form of "secular humanism." This activism also

²⁵² Ibid., 122.

²⁵³ Ibid., 124. This being said, Hunter, writing in 1987, would not have been aware of sources such as the Venona Project or KGB files declassified after the dissolution of the Soviet Union that confirmed certain suspicions regarding Soviet infiltration in the United States.

²⁵⁴ Ibid. From 1987 to 1989, the author served as a student assistant at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia. The congregation was pastored by Dr. Hermann L. Turner from 1930 to 1960 when he was elected moderator of the newly merged United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. The membership of the congregation grew to over 1,000 during his pastorate, but following the issuance of the Atlanta Ministers' Declaration in November 1957 (Dr. Turner was the principal author of the declaration), membership declined dramatically. To this day, the membership has never recovered from the impact of Dr. Turner's stance. This was true in spite of the generally liberal inclination of the congregation, so Hunter's suggestions regarding clergy activism would only seem to be confirmed all the more in this case.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 125.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

reversed the previous inclinations of congregations and their clergy.²⁵⁷ Hunter suggests that the success of this third wave was mixed. However, the long reaching implications of their activism are the backlash they spurred that continues to be felt today—"...Throughout this century, largely in reaction to their periodic surges of political activism, conservative Protestantism has been viewed as a hyperreactive, ultraconservative political group that is, by virtue of its religious convictions, bigoted and intolerant, absolutist and fanatical ..."²⁵⁸ Hunter continues to challenge the accuracy of these characterizations further,²⁵⁹ but accurate or not, these perceptions are now lodged firmly in the public mind and reinforced on a regular basis by a range of hostile sources. In a media-saturated culture, reciting a familiar mantra to its audience that "perception is reality," faith-based political activism faces a significant challenge in raising its voice credibly in the public square, regardless of its political or theological orientation.

The result of these waves of activism has been the progressive entrenchment of a mindset in U.S. society that the only valid mode of political discourse is that which is conducted in the "naked" public square. By this, it is meant that only in an arena shorn of religious metaphor and language can a common discussion of "the public good" be conducted. However, valid options remain between the poles of a naked public square and the equally unlikely ideal of a "Christian nation," and these will be explored at length through the relevant literature.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 126.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 127-128.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 129.

Richard John Neuhaus' 1984 book, *The Naked Public Square*,²⁶⁰ remains a landmark work on the subject. Written at the height of a presidential election year that saw a continuing resurgence of evangelical and fundamentalist Christian power within the ranks of the Republican Party, Neuhaus honed in on the underlying concern for people of faith on both sides of the political divide. Although the foundation of jurisprudence leading up to the crisis addressed by Neuhaus had been laid for the better part of the twentieth century,²⁶¹ as far as judicial overreach was concerned, the final straw²⁶² for many people in the United States occurred in the landmark case of *Engel v. Vitale* (*Engel*) that banned state-sponsored prayer in the public schools.²⁶³ Following on the heels of this case was the case of *Abington Township v. Schempp* (*Schempp*),²⁶⁴ which forbade required Bible reading in public schools and further precluded school prayer, and merely added fuel to the fire, as well as providing a visible enemy in the form of Madalyn Murray O'Hair.²⁶⁵

Bradley suggests that "... the public square on *Engel's* eve was not naked. The impregnable 'wall of separation' was instead a chain link fence of church-state cooperation."²⁶⁶ The series

²⁶⁰ Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1984).

²⁶¹ *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 U.S. 1 (1947).

²⁶² Gerard V. Bradley, "The Public Square: Naked No More?" (paper presented at the How Naked a Public Square? Reconsidering the Place of Religion in American Public Life Conference, James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, Department of Politics at Princeton University, October 22, 2004), 1.

²⁶³ *Engel v. Vitale*, 370 U.S. 421 (1962).

²⁶⁴ *Abington Township v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963).

²⁶⁵ Murray O'Hair's case, *Murray v. Curlett*, was decided jointly with *Schempp*.

²⁶⁶ Bradley, 13.

of U. S. Supreme Court decisions²⁶⁷ leading up to *Engel* had erected this "chain link fence" by building incrementally the tension between the "Establishment Clause" and the "Free Exercise Clause" of the First Amendment.²⁶⁸ However, by the early 1980s when Neuhaus wrote, the trajectory towards the present condition was well-established and gaining cultural momentum.

Thus Neuhaus, writing in 1984, begins his analysis with the advent of the so-called "religious new right."²⁶⁹ He begins by setting the context for the discussion much in the manner described above by Hunter, noting the starting point for Christian engagement in the public square with the recognition that the inbreaking of the Kingdom of God has implications for

²⁶⁷ Ibid., 8-19. In the recitation of case history that follows, the intent is merely to convey the trajectory of Supreme Court decisions that, according to Bradley, led to the establishment of a "naked public square" in the United States, not to convey a comprehensive history of the relevant constitutional law.

²⁶⁸ Ibid. See also Mary Ann Glendon, "The Naked Public Square Today: A Secular Public Square?" (paper presented at the How Naked a Public Square? Reconsidering the Place of Religion in American Public Life Conference, James Madison Program in American Ideals and Institutions, Department of Politics at Princeton University, October 22, 2004), 2. Glendon suggests that this tension is overstated:

Supreme Court decisions, with a few notable exceptions, have continued a six-decade long trend toward confining religion to the private sphere. By 1984, a number of legal scholars had exposed glaring defects in the line of religion cases where the Supreme Court, beginning in the 1940s, had set the two religion provisions of the First Amendment in opposition to each other. The lawyers' largely historical analyses were given a boost by Neuhaus who pointed out that the "two clause" approach flies in the face of a simple grammatical analysis of the text. The First Amendment's religion language ("Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof") does not contain any clauses at all. It is a simple declarative sentence with two participial phrases. The most natural reading of the sentence in the light of what we know about the purpose of the framers, Neuhaus argued, is that both phrase were meant to protect a single value: religious freedom. In complementary fashion, they work together toward this end: The establishment language bars Congress from abridging religious freedom in a specific way (by legislation "respecting an establishment"), while the free exercise language bars Congress from limiting religious freedom in general.

²⁶⁹ Neuhaus, 6. In fact, Neuhaus makes a point here of the distinction between a "new religious right" rather than a "religious new right," insisting that "religious" should be the modifier of "new right." While the author would not argue this distinction, nonetheless, exception is taken to the use of either term as each typically contributes nothing more to the current conversation than to point to "those people" about whom we wish to speak in the abstract and particularly in the negative. Such an approach does not aid in bringing down a wall but rather in raising it or validating its existence.

present-day existence.²⁷⁰ Neuhaus ostensibly makes a break with the agenda of this "religious new right" and its political expression on theological grounds, and yet, the reasons he cites seem oddly utilitarian, i.e., his expressed concern is with "discrediting the public responsibility of religion ...by giving a monopoly on religiously informed political action to the most strident moral majoritarians who show few signs of understanding the problems and promises inherent in the American experiment ..."²⁷¹

Neuhaus notes two conflicting beliefs held in American society—that "religion is something between an individual and his God" and "the insistent intuition that America is in some significant sense a 'Christian nation.'"²⁷² He further notes the internal divisions in Christianity, which lead people to question which "religion," which "Christianity" will speak in the public square.²⁷³ In Neuhaus' view, the founders did not state many things regarding the relationship of religion and the state explicitly because an underlying current of religious outlook was presupposed to reinforce the public ethic—"They did not think it necessary to construct a 'civil religion' for the maintenance of republican virtue."²⁷⁴ In fact, "[t]oday's

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 14, 15.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 19. On this point, the author is in full agreement with Neuhaus. Political compromise is inevitable if the status quo of any public issue is to be resolved by a plural people. To pursue the "scorched earth" strategy that has typified much of American political engagement, regardless of political stripe, serves only to render the ground that must be tread by philosophically like-minded persons, who may nonetheless be willing to accept incremental progress, difficult to traverse.

²⁷² Ibid., 20.

²⁷³ Ibid., 21.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 22.

debates about how or whether values are to be taught in public schools would have been inconceivable a hundred years ago."²⁷⁵

However, a shift in the 20th century from the presumed metaphor of the "melting pot" to that of a pluralistic society in the United States changed this commonly understood foundation.²⁷⁶ This shift began the movement towards the belief that the United States should be a secular society. Quoting Leo Pfeffer, Neuhaus notes that as this movement gained traction, the cultural battlefield moved towards litigation and away from negotiation:

The nine judges on the Supreme Court, being immune to political reprisal since they serve for life, may be performing a significant though quite controversial function; they may be compelling the people to accept what the judges think is good for them but which they would not accept for elected legislators.²⁷⁷

Thus came a series of Supreme Court decisions in the latter half of the 20th century and extending into the 21st that took Bradley's "chain link fence" and plugged up more and more of the holes. In 1947, the Court held in *Everson v. Board of Education (Everson)* that a New Jersey law authorizing public financial support for transportation to parochial schools was constitutional.²⁷⁸ However, it did so in a manner that significantly muddled the jurisprudential waters in the process by invoking the Establishment Clause in a case that had

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Cf. Lindalyn Kakadelis, interview with the author, May 25, 2007. Ms. Kakadelis suggests in that interview, as have others, that in the current cultural context, the appropriate metaphor may be a "salad" rather than a "melting pot."

²⁷⁷ Neuhaus, 26. Neuhaus notes that this is not always a bad outcome:

At times the courts have been called upon to resolve questions that resist political resolution. Even on some relatively minor but divisive questions, politicians prefer not to stand up and be counted and they therefore toss "hot potatoes" to the courts. When this happens, it does not necessarily constitute a failure of democratic governance. The courts too are part of the democratic process.

²⁷⁸ *Everson v. Board of Education*.

been briefed as a due process consideration.²⁷⁹ This invocation established dictum that would prove significant in future cases.²⁸⁰

The Court further held that the First Amendment "requires the state to be a neutral in its relations with groups of religious believers and non-believers; it does not require the state to be their adversary. State power is no more to be used so as to handicap religions, than it is to favor them."²⁸¹ It further expanded the Establishment Clause to apply to the states, not only the Congress.

McCullum v. Board of Education Dist. 71 (McCullum) took a very different direction, holding in 1948 that requiring religious instruction in public schools as part of the curriculum was unconstitutional, violating the Establishment Clause.²⁸² Whereas the counsel for the Board argued that "historically the First Amendment was intended to forbid only government preference of one religion over another, not an impartial governmental assistance of all religions," the Court begged to differ.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Bradley, 8, 10.

²⁸⁰ *Everson v. Board of Education* (330 U.S. 1, 15-16)

The 'establishment of religion' clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another. Neither can force nor influence a person to go to or to remain away from church against his will or force him to profess a belief or disbelief in any religion. No person can be punished for entertaining or professing religious beliefs or disbeliefs, for church attendance or non-attendance. No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support any religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion. Neither a state nor the Federal Government can, openly or secretly, participate in the affairs of any religious organizations or groups and vice versa. In the words of Jefferson, the clause against establishment of religion by law was intended to erect 'a wall of separation between Church and State.'

²⁸¹ *Ibid.* (330 U.S. 1, 18)

²⁸² *McCullum v. Board of Education Dist. 71*, 333 U.S. 203 (1948).

²⁸³ *Ibid.* (333 U.S. 203, 211)

In 1952, *Zorach v. Clausen (Zorach)*²⁸⁴ held that a New York City policy allowing children to be released from school early in order to receive religious instruction in a parochial school was constitutional. In one sense *Zorach* might be seen as a victory for religion in the public square inasmuch as it affirmed that "We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being."²⁸⁵ However, it nonetheless advanced certain concepts that would prove to be of service to a naked public square. In *Grand Rapids School District v. Ball (Grand Rapids)*²⁸⁶ the Court would quote back *Zorach* in support of its ruling.²⁸⁷ While one may debate the extent of the Court's consistency, the *Grand Rapids* decision used *Zorach* to further the view that in order to maintain the neutrality of the state with regard to religion and non-religion, non-religion would be considered the "neutral" position.²⁸⁸ In other words, secularism and a naked public square would be the standard for judgment.

In addition they ask that we distinguish or overrule our holding in the *Everson* case that the Fourteenth Amendment made the 'establishment of religion' clause of the First Amendment applicable as a prohibition against the States. After giving full consideration to the arguments presented we are unable to accept either of these contentions.

²⁸⁴ *Zorach v. Clauson*, 343 U.S. 306 (1952).

²⁸⁵ *Ibid.* (343 U.S. 306, 313)

²⁸⁶ *Grand Rapids School District v. Ball* 473 U.S. 373 (1985).

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.* (473 U.S. 373, 381-382)

Since *Everson* made clear that the guarantees of the Establishment Clause apply to the States, we have often grappled with the problem of state aid to nonpublic, religious schools ... The solution to this problem adopted by the Framers and consistently recognized by this Court is jealously to guard the right of every individual to worship according to the dictates of conscience while requiring the government to maintain a course of neutrality among religions, and between religion and non-religion. Only in this way can we "make room for as wide a variety of beliefs and creeds as the spiritual needs of man deem necessary" and "sponsor an attitude on the part of government that shows no partiality to any one group and lets each flourish according to the zeal of its adherents and the appeal of its dogma."

²⁸⁸ Bradley, 15.

Perhaps an overspiritualization of the gospel might lead one not to be particularly concerned about any of these turns of events. However, not being concerned opens the way for situations to arise that do give rise to the concern that "... if attention is not paid, the political threatens to encompass everything."²⁸⁹ Summing up the outcome of the history outlined above by Hunter and by Neuhaus as well, Neuhaus concludes, "Millions of Americans have for a long time felt put upon. Theirs is a powerful resentment against values that they believe have been imposed upon them, and an equally powerful sense of outrage at the suggestion that they are the ones who pose the threat of undemocratically imposing values upon others."

Thus, religion continues to be viewed as a polarizer of the political landscape rather than a healer of divisions. Whether that condition is any worse than in previous times is difficult to prove. On the scale of a Spanish Inquisition or a Thirty Years War, such a comparison is patently silly in the present day American context. Even in modern American history, one would be hard pressed to substantiate a case in either direction because such matters are so clearly a matter of relative perception. Nonetheless, a role for religion in the public square in general and for the Christian faith in particular must remain viable, and what determines that viability will be "... the capacity of various religious leaderships to liberate themselves from their captivity to political partisanship."²⁹⁰ Such a role must remain viable for the maintenance of liberal democracy and because "...we are 'called' to exercise influence to the glory of God and the welfare of our neighbor."²⁹¹

²⁸⁹ Neuhaus, 30, 37.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 60.

²⁹¹ Ibid., 63-64.

Neuhaus makes the following "carefully nuanced proposition: *On balance and considering the alternatives, the influence of the United States is a force for good in the world.*"²⁹² On this and the foregoing bases, he argues for Christian engagement in the *civitas* that is the United States of America. Such an engagement in a *civitas* suggests a level of civility in that engagement, but according to Neuhaus, "Civility has become form without substance ... Loyalty to the *civitas* can safely be nurtured only if the *civitas* is not the object of highest loyalty ..."²⁹³

The problem with the Supreme Court's trajectory in the latter half of the 20th century and continuing into the present, is that, "Religion, in the court's meaning, became radically individualized and privatized."

Such a religious evacuation of the public square cannot be sustained, either in concept or in practice. When religion in any traditional or recognizable form is excluded from the public square, it does not mean that the public square is in fact naked. This is the other side of the "naked public square" metaphor. When recognizable religion is excluded, the vacuum will be filled by *ersatz* religion, by religion bootlegged into the public space under other names ...²⁹⁴

The consequences of such a condition are potentially and, in many cases, actually dire because "... once religion is reduced to nothing more than privatized conscience, the public square has only two actors in it—the state and the individual." The state, in Neuhaus' view, has nothing to fear from individualized religion; it is institutionalized religion—"a community that generates and transmits moral values— that "... threaten[s] the totalitarian proposition that everything is to be within the state, nothing is to be outside the state."²⁹⁵

²⁹² Ibid., 72.

²⁹³ Ibid., 75-77.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 80-81.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 82.

This leads Neuhaus to conclude that the "no establishment" and "free exercise" clauses of the First Amendment to the Constitution actually serve the opposite reason from that ordinarily espoused in the media, i.e., they exist, not to protect society from the church, but rather to protect the independence of the church from the state as a witness to transcendent values.²⁹⁶ Thus, a truly naked public square "... is a vacuum begging to be filled ... [secularists] would cast out the devil of particularist religion and thus put the public square in proper secular order ... [but having] cast out one devil, they unavoidably invite the entrance of seven devils worse than the first."²⁹⁷

Neuhaus suggests that what the courts have enshrined in law is increasingly expressed in culture, with the notion that ours is a secular society taking fuller root in cultural expression.²⁹⁸ Furthermore, with religion effectively removed from the sphere of public education, Glendon notes that the vacuum has been filled as predicted in the field of education—"It is hard to think of any public settings from which religion has been more rigorously excluded, or where secularism is more dogmatically promulgated ... When one considers that most children spend more waking hours in school than with their parents, and that many public schools actively proselytize against the most deeply held convictions of many religions, it is obvious why the schools have become the chief battlegrounds for the struggle over the role of religion, not only in public life, but in private life as well ..."²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Ibid., 116. In this light, the Theological Declaration of Barmen is an historically apt example of the need for the church to retain such counter-cultural independence.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 86.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 97-98.

²⁹⁹ Glendon, 4. Cf. Neuhaus, 161.

The language of "battleground" is troubling in many respects. Biblical images of the Lord of hosts leading his angels in triumph notwithstanding, is such an image helpful to Christian *engagement* in a liberal democratic society? The position taken herein is that such a combative approach is neither helpful to the fulfillment of a Christian calling to cultural engagement nor to be desired. Neither is a sectarian approach that washes its hands of the affairs of the world. This thesis joins Neuhaus in calling for the church to "... act in a sense of provisionality and historical modesty ... Only as the church, in its own teaching and life, cultivates this sense of provisionality and modesty will religion be seen less threatening to those who would now bar it from the public square ..."³⁰⁰

In *The Scattered Voice*,³⁰¹ James Skillen offers an assessment of the political landscape in the United States not unlike that offered by Neuhaus six years earlier. In the intervening years, Ronald Reagan's vice president, George H. W. Bush, had been elected president largely by a combination of the Republican Party's "southern strategy" and its continuing appeal to conservative, evangelical Christian voters. The year 1990 would also include midterm congressional elections. The global balance of power was shifting as eastern bloc communist governments were collapsing, in some cases at the instigation of religiously-

Church-state relations become problematicized relatively late in our history, and overwhelmingly in connection with conflicts related to education. This is not simply because the common school movement represented a major governmental expansion into a sphere previously outside the state's purview. That expression was not legally problematic until it became official doctrine that there is no moral consensus in American life, that ours is a secular society.

³⁰⁰ Neuhaus, 123-124. Such a basis for compromise seems very similar to the covenantal dialogue suggested herein.

³⁰¹ James W. Skillen, *The Scattered Voice: Christians at Odds in the Public Square* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1990).

inspired movements. In short, the political fortunes of conservative Christians had never seemed higher.

In this context, Skillen examines seven Christian political perspectives ranging along a typical conservative-liberal spectrum:

- Pro-American conservatives
- Cautious and critical conservatives
- Sophisticated neo-conservatives
- Traditional and reflective liberals
- Civil-rights reformers
- Pro-justice activists
- Theonomic
- Reconstructionists

Skillen sees this spectrum as shades of "the same political tradition, namely, Western *Liberalism*," with one pole, "conservatives," focused on "individual rights, limited government, private-property rights, national independence, and the moral convictions held by most of those who founded the country..." while the other pole, "liberals," is focused on "... the responsibility of a democratic government to advance the general welfare, to enhance the material equality and opportunity of every citizen, to overcome problems such as poverty and racism that hold back some citizens from enjoying all the privileges of a free society, and to promote international harmony." While recognizing this spectrum, Skillen also recognizes a significant limitation in answering a basically utilitarian question, i.e., "things government should or should not *do*" rather than an ontological question, i.e., "what a state or political order ought to *be*."³⁰²

³⁰² Ibid., 16-17.

Skillen considers the historical roots of the political landscape at the time of his writing, beginning with the early church and the church from Constantine to the Reformation³⁰³ and proceeds briefly through the roots of religion in American politics. Along the way he notes that, "In a curious way, the American colonial experiments manifested *both* the sacralization of power *and* the beginnings of a radical de-sacralization (or secularization) of power."³⁰⁴ He also notes the impact of conflicting biblical interpretations on the political context.³⁰⁵ He points out that "... the truly practical challenge for Christians is to learn how to exercise their political responsibilities realistically in a differentiated society out of obedience to the God who has revealed himself as Lord in Jesus Christ ... Renewal of the heart leading to a desire to serve God does not automatically produce fruits of public obedience ..."³⁰⁶

Skillen begins his analysis of the seven political perspectives with *pro-American conservatives*. He characterizes this perspective as "... seeking very diligently to guard and recover the traditional values that made this country great—the value of individual freedom, moral responsibility, limited government, protection of private property, and love of God and country."³⁰⁷ Citing sources such as historian Barbara Tuchman and sociologist Robert N. Bellah,³⁰⁸ Skillen addresses the fundamental loss of moral direction, meaning and coherence that underlies this group's need to defend Christian morality in the public square,

³⁰³ Ibid., 20.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 22.

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 25-27.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 28-29.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 33.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 34, 35.

characterizing the general moralism of their agenda and observing a basic, though ironic pattern in their approach in the face of cultural diversity. He sees a rallying cry for "someone to do something," but "... in our highly differentiated society, where very little of our politics is conducted through small-town, consensus-building meetings ... [this] can lead people to become even more disgusted ..." with the actual outcome, which more often than not, falls short of the desired one.³⁰⁹ What Skillen sees lacking in this perspective is a coherent public philosophy that is grounded in biblical revelation, and as a result, its adherents "preach to the choir" with the further result that they become indistinguishable from their secular counterparts, judged by outcomes rather than content, i.e., success.³¹⁰

Skillen next evaluates *cautious and critical conservatives*. He points to a number of voices, including Charles Colson, Mark Amstutz, Doug Bandow and Kenneth A. Myers who expressed this self-critical caution. He points to their focus on history and the past and present consequences of prior activism and public policy,³¹¹ but he suggests that perhaps the limit to their caution is that eventually, nonetheless, decisions have to be made by those working in the arena.

Moving on to what he terms, "*sophisticated neo-conservatives*," Skillen addresses the agenda of those like Neuhaus and Michael Novak who find their roots in the work of Reinhold Niebuhr, Daniel Bell, Jacques Maritain, Robert Nisbet, Peter Berger and John Courtney Murray. Much of Skillen's description of Neuhaus' thought parallels what is described above

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 38-40.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 53.

³¹¹ Ibid., 61.

regarding the cultural and religious foundations of the political scene and is therefore not reiterated here. In the case of both Neuhaus and Novak, Skillen sees their important contribution to the socio-political and cultural conversation in re-emphasizing the role of "mediating structures."

Skillen notes that unlike the cautious and critical conservatives, Neuhaus and Novak do not start with a negative or skeptical view of government—"Rather, they start with a positive and complex view of human society, in which they believe government can and should play an important role. But the political world must be approached with the recognition of its secondary or correlative status."³¹² However, he still points to certain inadequacies and ambiguities in the neo-conservative approach, partly because of their ambiguity about the religious roots of politics and partly because of their traditional view of the political order. For instance, in the case of Neuhaus, Skillen is troubled by Neuhaus' somewhat contrived distinction between "true religion" and the "*ersatz* religion" that fills the cultural vacuum in its absence. Skillen suggests that Neuhaus is unclear about his complaint—is he concerned with winning control of the turf in the culture wars, or is he more concerned with the exclusion of so-called "true religion" from the conversation? Skillen sees Neuhaus primarily concerned with the second consideration. Indeed, in reading Neuhaus, it is easy to sense that he feels a decisive moment slipping through his fingers, that like Habakkuk in his watchtower, he wishes to make his warning.

In the case of Novak, Skillen sees him entering the debate in the notion of the "common good," a perspective Skillen sees him expressing from a traditional Catholic perspective.

³¹² Ibid., 86.

However, Skillen does not think Novak gets very far with this argument, suggesting that Novak appears to believe the common good appears *ex nihilo* much like Adam Smith's "invisible hand" at work in the market.³¹³ Skillen concludes regarding the so-called "sophisticated neo-conservatives" that "... they have helped to bring us face to face with a highly differentiated society of modern America ... [and] ... revived the notion of a religiously rooted culture and society ... The task remains to put forward a Christian public philosophy sufficient to define a differentiated *political* order within this complex society."³¹⁴

Speaking next about his next category, *traditional and reflective liberals*, Skillen begins, interestingly enough, with the American Catholic Bishops, again speaking of the Catholic tradition of the common good. He thus notes, "Rather than starting with the American colonial heritage as pro-American conservatives do or with a caution about human sinfulness as the critical conservatives do or with a critique of unbounded secular liberalism as the neo-conservatives do, the Catholic Bishops begin by affirming a [view] that requires of government an active responsibility for shaping 'society as a whole.'"³¹⁵ He also notes their starting point for human rights in natural law and the foundational principle of *subsidiarity*, the principle that individuals, institutions and governments have "... an obligation ... to serve the common good of society ..." in a manner commensurate with their proper roles in life such that they do not inappropriately infringe upon the legitimate domains of each other.³¹⁶

³¹³ Ibid., 92.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 95.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 100.

³¹⁶ Ibid., 101-103.

Skillen considers study papers by the United Church of Christ and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), as well as the work of M. Douglas Meeks, Ronald H. Stone, Robert L. Stivers, and Max Stackhouse as typifying similar work by Protestants. For example, "What we need today instead, Meeks argues, is an expanded liberalism that seeks to recover 'shared social meanings' (the Catholic Bishops would call it solidarity) without destroying individual rights."³¹⁷ Skillen notes a point of commonality between the polar opposites of reflective liberals and the pro-American conservatives in "... the early Puritan dream of a new covenant people establishing a Christian city on the hill for all the world to see."³¹⁸ According to Skillen, Stackhouse would argue that, "Corporations themselves have a calling, a vocation from God, and Christians should work to develop a public theology by which to evaluate corporations and to hold them accountable."³¹⁹ This bold assertion by Stackhouse provides an appropriate segue to a discussion of boundaries within communities that sounds surprisingly like the Roman Catholic bishops' principle of subsidiarity.³²⁰ Skillen concludes from this that these concepts of the common good and economic democracy are insufficient and at some level indistinguishable from the pro-American conservative vision, a view very much in line with Hauerwas and Willimon.³²¹

³¹⁷ Ibid., 106.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 110-111.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 111.

³²⁰ Ibid., 113-114.

³²¹ Ibid., 116, 117.

Skillen next addresses the perspective of the *civil-rights reformers*, pointing to the roots of that movement in the African-American churches. Initially, it is difficult to determine how Skillen differentiates this group from the traditional reflective liberals. However, this differentiation soon becomes clear in its focus on *individual rights* rather than a more broadly defined common good.³²² Given these realities, Skillen concludes, "The need of civil-rights reformers is much the same as that of all other Christians—a comprehensive, Biblical view of political and social life that allows them to sort out the merely humanistic and sometimes anti-Christian aspects of our system from those aspects that truly conform to the requirements of justice."³²³

Again, looking at matters strictly from the perspective of a label, one would think that it would be difficult to differentiate Skillen's category of *pro-justice activists* from the traditional and reflective liberals and the civil-rights reformers. However, as in the previous cases, subtle differences soon emerge. Skillen includes people such as Jim Wallis of the Sojourners Community and Ronald J. Sider of Evangelicals for Social Action in this category and describes the differences between their approaches to political engagement, primarily in terms of their views of radical engagement, seeing the problem as including Christians as being at fault for social injustice because of their own preoccupation with consumerism. Skillen suggests that the difference between Wallis and Sider is mostly stylistic. Wallis' style is marked by "critical protest against the powers that dominate the age" and an *a priori* suspicion of these powers as manifested in governments that looks to act outside the system

³²² Ibid., 131.

³²³ Ibid., 138.

first rather than trying to change the system.³²⁴ Sider, on the other hand, is more inclined to try to change the system from within through participatory politics. Like Hauerwas and Willimon, and to some extent, Yoder, Wallis would focus more on building the Christian community internally first—"His pattern is one of 'community and protest,' 'disengagement and witness.'"³²⁵

Skillen would consider the various liberation theologies to fit in this category as well, particularly the theology of José Míguez Bonino, but he notes the dichotomy of this theology's coercive approach towards the attainment of a noncoerced end state³²⁶ At the core of pro-justice activism, Skillen sees a basic ambiguity, perhaps even an ambivalence about the nature of the state and its role relative to the Christian community. In the final analysis, "The activism that flows from the ambiguity of this dilemma may retain its prophetic appeal for many people, but without a public philosophy, it will also continue to manifest an arbitrariness that may repel as many Christians as it attracts."³²⁷

Whether one calls the perspective "radical," "Christ against culture," or "pro-justice activism," the same uneasy feeling described above remains. One suspects that the ambiguity Skillen describes may be part and parcel with reading a pre-Constantinian text in a Constantinian or even post-Constantinian era. While certain concepts such as the *mišpat*, the *šēdāqā'* or the *hesed* of God remain timeless and inextricably tied to the biblical revelation, it is

³²⁴ Ibid., 145.

³²⁵ Ibid., 148.

³²⁶ Ibid., 155.

³²⁷ Ibid., 161.

another thing to tie the church's action in response to that revelation to a specific mindset or paradigm associated with a particular time in the biblical narrative as though God is not able to do something new in the present time or something other than what he has done before through those whom he has called. There is indeed a time for the stance of the pro-justice activist, but that time is not every time, and suspicion and resistance certainly should not be the church's default stance. To do so is to betray an unmerited cynicism that cannot even find justification in having first tried and then failed.

Skillen's final type, the *theonomic reconstructionists*, is characterized by the work of Greg Bahnsen, which "[shares] an early Puritan conviction that God's old-covenant law code for Israel represents a sufficiently complete compendium of civil and criminal law, that biblical Christians can derive from those texts nearly all the normative guidance they need for contemporary politics."³²⁸ If a connective line can be drawn between traditional and reflective liberals, civil-rights reformers, and pro-justice activists, one may also say that, to some degree, the theonomic reconstructionists begin at the starting point of the pro-American conservatives and then take it to the next level, perhaps even projecting it to the nth degree. Such a perspective takes its starting point in the religious and covenantal foundations of the New England colonies and seeks a restoration of those roots. But "...this kind of walking with God in history will require careful interpretation of the Bible in the context of seeking to fulfill our contemporary civic obligation ... The combination of Old Testament case laws, modern economic libertarianism, decentralized and localized governments, and special

³²⁸ Ibid., 163-164, 165-166.

public privilege for Christianity is an eclectic synthesis that will require more than textual exegesis and an appeal to God's sovereignty to validate."³²⁹

From the seven perspectives, taken together, Skillen is able to synthesize four essential elements for a Christian approach to politics:

1. *A Christian approach to civic responsibility requires a perspective that allows us to deal with the full reality of politics and government.*
2. *A Christian perspective must come to grips with the real history of American politics.*
3. *A Christian political philosophy should account for its biblical roots and its place in the Christian tradition.*
4. *A Christian approach to contemporary politics must deal both with our highly differentiated society and with our rapidly shrinking world.*

There is much to commend itself in these principles in our attempts to understand the social and political context of the School Building Solutions Committee's creation and its subsequent work. With regard to the first principle, although Reinhold Niebuhr's so-called "Christian realism" has been taken to task here for its underlying cynicism, it would be naïve to enter the political realm with blinders on. Experience has shown that to do so with the expectation that one's hands will remain clean and that one will receive the accolades and gratitude of the multitudes is exceedingly unrealistic. Furthermore, as Hauerwas and Willimon so aptly demonstrate, to enter into the fray with the expectation that one will be highly "effective," whatever that may be understood to mean, will prove to be a largely insufficient motivation. Thus, as in any vocational endeavor, a clear and distinct sense of the call of God to enter a mission field that does not inherently appreciate a Christian

³²⁹ Ibid., 179. To be blunt, in a world after September 11, 2001, religion in the public square, and specifically, the Christian faith in the public square, suffer enough already from overwrought comparisons of religious fundamentalisms and conspiratorial theories regarding the implementation of a Christian shari'a law to merit serious consideration in this present context.

perspective regarding the relationship of power to a desired set of political ends as a prerequisite to entry.

Second, as should be abundantly clear from the prologue, the introduction and the narrative of the case under consideration here, a clear understanding of a historical context of American politics, and in this case local history and politics, is another prerequisite. Without a clear understanding of the history of the evolution of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system and the related history of the *Swann* case and the community's experience of forced busing; the African-American community's resentment of the loss of what it considers to have been a vibrant interracial community in the Brooklyn neighborhood of Charlotte's Second Ward under urban renewal; and the current thinly-disguised efforts to re-gentrify the Belmont and Double Oaks neighborhoods under the currently fashionable moniker of "urban redevelopment," it would be impossible to grasp the complex dynamics and interactions of the various interest groups in the community as represented in the School Building Solutions Committee. A Christian entering any political arena without understanding such background is severely handicapped from the onset. One must resign oneself to the reality that gaining such an understanding requires a commitment for the long haul.

Third, accounting for our biblical roots and our place in the Christian tradition is but a specific extension of the historical principle elaborated above. It goes without saying that every generation of Christians must resist the temptation to consider the revelation of God to have been delivered into its own hands *senkrecht von oben*. As has been demonstrated abundantly, both in the biblical and theological reflection of Chapter 2 and in the historical

development from Augustine through the 19th and 20th century foundations for our present day political understandings in this chapter, Christian engagement in the public square has a rich history of both faithfulness and unfaithfulness. It would be the depth of folly not to internalize this history prior to entering the political arena.

Finally, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community is a microcosmic example of the fourth principle that Christian political engagement must take into account our highly differentiated society along with our rapidly shrinking world. The community's present-day context differs substantially from a snapshot of the community in 1982. Charlotte, for better or worse, has tied its fortunes to a "grow or die" political and economic mindset, one that sincerely believes the key to keeping this economic engine humming is a vibrant uptown core. Thus, its destiny is tied to its ability and that of its governing officials to navigate the rocky shoals of the diverse political and economic interests of the community. This, alongside an electronic political subculture that can inundate an elected local official with hundreds of e-mails at a moment's notice and can raise vast sums for campaign financing without ever setting eyes on the donor, handicaps any entrant into the field who fails to take into consideration the vast potential of the networking of communities of like interest.³³⁰

How then shall one navigate such a complex path? Stephen L. Carter's *Civility* offers a fundamental understanding of the grease that lubricates these personal interactions and renders them efficacious for society at large. Carter begins by hearkening back to a day in the 19th century when much of our long distance travel in the United States was by rail. He

³³⁰ Glenn H. Reynolds, *An Army of Davids: How Markets and Technology Empower Ordinary People to Beat Big Media, Big Government, and Other Goliaths* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Current, 2006).

remarks on the publication of travelers' guides such as Isaac Peebles' *Politeness on Railroads*, intended to communicate at that time certain rules and considerations that would allow passengers from different social strata to endure lengthy journeys with a minimum of friction. Carter notes that, "Everyone followed the rules for the sake of their fellow passengers, and they did so, as one historian has noted, out of the spirit of 'self-denial and the self-sacrifice of one's own comfort for another's.'" For Carter, this notion of a shared journey aboard accommodations that require the observance of certain expectations of civility becomes a metaphor for the failed state of incivility and polarization in our contemporary culture.³³¹ Carter believes that our underlying failure to recognize this condition explains that state.³³²

Furthermore, Carter notes the effect this incivility is having on our body politic—"Few of us can be bothered longer to involve ourselves in self-governance: we're voting less, we are joining less, we are evidently discussing the issues of the day with our fellow citizens less. Thus, our growing incivility becomes a threat to our democracy."³³³ Carter begins by tracing the development of the rules of common etiquette in western society, beginning with the publication in 1578 of Erasmus' book, *De ciuilitate morum puerilium*,³³⁴ which urged the

³³¹ Carter, 4. A similar notion of the moral underpinnings on display in the outward expression of civility is found in a chapter entitled, "Manners Are Morals" in Phyllis McGinley, *Sixpence in Her Shoe* (New York: Macmillan, 1964), 219-230.

³³² Carter, 8.

³³³ *Ibid.*, 10.

³³⁴ Desiderius Erasmus, Gilbert de Longueil, and John Davis Batchelder Collection (Library of Congress), *De ciuilitate morum puerilium, per D. Erasmus Roterodamum libellus, Ab auctore recognitus, & scholijs illustratus per Gisbertum Longolium ...* ed. (Antuerpiae: Ex officina Henrici Loëi ... 1578).

adoption of *civilité* in order to discipline otherwise unruly human impulses.³³⁵ He points to the impact of interest groups in the political sphere with their attendant emphasis on individual rights at the expense of the common good,³³⁶ and while the book does not devote specific chapters to politics or the media, they are, nonetheless, relevant to all else he discusses.³³⁷

Carter acknowledges that civility can be abused in order to blunt and even delegitimize legitimate debate. However, he rightly notes that in political discourse and dialogue, "When we are civil, we are not pretending to like those we actually despise; we are not pretending to hold any attitude toward them, except that we accept and value them as every bit our equals before God. The duty to love our neighbors is a precept of both the Christian and Jewish traditions, and the duty is not lessened because we happen to think our neighbor is wrong about a few things."³³⁸ He also points out that in the loss of a so-called "golden age" of civility, Americans have been stunned to realize what they have forsaken:

As the sixties swept into the seventies, leaving behind the wreckage of the illusion, there was nothing available to put in its place: no shared meanings, no shared commitments, none of the social glue that makes the people of people. Nobody had thought that far ahead. Americans were like homeowners who find a huge crack in the basement floor of their new home and, in their fury at the previous owners for not revealing this flaw, decide not to strengthen the foundation but to demolish the house. Only afterward, when they calm down and survey the mass, does it occur to them that they now have no place to live.³³⁹

³³⁵ Carter, 14-15.

³³⁶ Ibid., 17.

³³⁷ Ibid., 19.

³³⁸ Ibid., 23.

³³⁹ Ibid., 53.

However, for Carter, civility is not something we reserve only for those whom we know, but more importantly, precisely for those whom we do not know, the stranger, the "sojourner in our land" as it were. In elucidating this point, he makes a strong and helpful connection to the biblical and theological reflection of Chapter 4 of this thesis in his treatment of civility in relation to the doing of *hesed*.³⁴⁰ If, as has been noted in Chapter 3, *hesed* is integrally related to *mišpat* and *ḏāqāḏ*, wherein God's *hesed* acts as Neuhaus' "Arbiter Absolute," Carter's extension of the concept to include the stranger is the necessary step to applying the covenantal framework of Chapter 3 to a broader, more inclusive covenantal community, including those not religiously predisposed to the framework's underlying concept. Thus, he establishes a unique role for religion in the public square because "... Only religion offers a sacred language of sacrifice-selflessness-awe that enables believers to treat their fellow citizens as ... fellow passengers. But even if religion is the engine of civility, it has too few serious practitioners, which is why those who are truly moved by it to love their fellow human beings are so special."³⁴¹

Carter discusses the limitations of free will and the associated emphasis on individual rights within a community. He suggests that while the exercise of one's free will may be accomplished with full integrity, such exercise does not relieve one of the communal consequences of that exercise—"... if I choose to do so, I have a little basis for complaint if the community rejects me in turn. The cost of including me as a full member—the cost of *trusting* me—is simply too high."³⁴²

³⁴⁰ Ibid., 71-72.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 74-75.

³⁴² Ibid., 83-84.

In other words, the implicit self-sacrifice associated with being civil communicates to other members of the community in which one finds oneself that one can be trusted if for no other reason than because one displays a deference to the needs and sensibilities of others. Returning again to the theme of sacrifice, Carter notes that, "The baby boom generation seems to be only the second in our history to move into positions of power without ever having shared a national experience of sacrifice of the sort that molds not only character but the nation's sense of itself and what its values," suggesting that the last time this occurred in our history immediately following the Civil War, and that generation of leaders "ultimately gave us the Red Scares, the great trusts that paralyzed the economy, the uncertain victory in the First World War, the self-indulgence of the Roaring Twenties, and the Depression itself."³⁴³ He posits that this shared experience of sacrifice lends itself to the development of a shared moral understanding:

... If we lose that commitment, whether it is forgotten in the hurly-burly of contemporary life or left behind in our mad rush toward self-fulfillment, we also lose the connections to one another that bind us into a single nation. Without those connections, we are left to face each other armed with nothing but mutual suspicion, skepticism, fear, and hostility—in short, the deep instinct for self—the tools with which, prior to civilization, an earlier generation of human beings doubtless faced all strangers. Which is to say, we act like animals.³⁴⁴

Suggestive of Reinhold Niebuhr's conclusion, Carter puts forth sacrifice and neighbor-love as the only force capable of achieving the civility necessary for society's members to coexist peaceably. Mere toleration will not suffice—"If we decide to treat others well merely in order to provide a social lubricant, we quickly began to make enough exceptions to swallow the rule: this one does not deserve respect because he is so rude, that one because of her political views, a third one because of some deep, dark secret that is suddenly a part of the

³⁴³ Ibid., 91.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 94.

public knowledge."³⁴⁵ The acknowledgement of the inherent worth of the other must be at the core of our interactions one with another—"In short, anything about which we feel so strongly that we are unwilling to cast it aside in order to see the face of God in others is a part of the structure of incivility that is so warping our world."³⁴⁶

In examining the ways in which incivility manifests itself in our society, Carter points to the demonization of the other as the polar opposite of the self-sacrifice that constitutes civility. Such demonization leads to the death of legitimate dialogue and results in an underlying cynicism about the nature of the information we take in from the various media—"That is why ... the other institutions with which we interact must provide us with the moral tools to resist the urge to allow politics to impose its cardinal rule—*winning at all costs*—on the rest of social life."³⁴⁷ Carter is concerned that our society is losing the art of "civil listening." Although in our opinion poll-driven culture we may know a great deal about what people are thinking, we are no closer to knowing what they have to say—"When we allow the polls to guide us, then, we are twice moral cowards: first, because we do not make up our own minds, and, second, because we do not demand that other people tell us the reasons for what they think."³⁴⁸

Carter addresses, in turn, the disrespect we show one another and the manner in which we allow the language of the marketplace to commoditize others. He likewise demonstrates, in

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 101.

³⁴⁶ Ibid., 108.

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 130.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 146.

a manner reminiscent of Jacques Ellul's *The Technological Bluff*,³⁴⁹ how technological advancement seduces us into believing that progress in the Information Age and gains in efficiency gain us wisdom when in fact, "... if we follow rules of civility because they are useful and efficient rather than because they are morally required of us, the rules will fall away as technological and other changes make them less useful."³⁵⁰

Carter also notes a pitfall in the secular cultural conversation—the lure of *scientism*, "... the effort to disguise as science things that have little to do with science, in the hope of making them look more attractive—in much the same way that a fisherman baits a hook hoping the fish will think it is food, or the way that a politician often quotes Scripture hoping the audience will think the politician's preferences are the will of God." The problem with scientism, according to Carter, is that it becomes a means for avoiding debate—"If I make a scientific claim, my message is that I have not mere opinion but actual science—hence, *truth*—on my side, suggesting that anybody who disagrees with me should simply shut up and go away ..."³⁵¹

Carter returns to the subject of law, individual rights and the limits of tolerance in a society. In speaking to these limits, he notes that in spite of the exercise of civil listening, at some point persons of differing opinions will still disagree, and yet action must nonetheless be taken. Carter thus cautions anyone who would suggest that the easy answer to any moral

³⁴⁹ Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Bluff* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1990).

³⁵⁰ Carter, 189. Anyone who has, in the perceived safety of online anonymity, participated actively in an Internet chat room or observed or participated in a "flame war" in an online forum or in an e-mail or blog comment thread can attest to this reality.

³⁵¹ Ibid., 204, 205.

disagreement is simply to acquire sufficient power to legislate its outcome by pointing to the necessity for law enforcement personnel to perform their duties while armed in the event that they encounter resistance when they enforce such laws—"... Consequently, every time we enact a new law, we create the possibility that violent means will be required to transform the new law's command into reality ... law is violence."³⁵²

Carter summarizes the book, then, by highlighting and reiterating fifteen rules that have been interspersed throughout the book and constitute what he calls "the etiquette of democracy."

These make up the framework for the book:³⁵³

1. *Our duty to be civil toward others does not depend on whether we like them or not.*
2. *Civility requires that we sacrifice for strangers, not just for the people we happen to know.*
3. *Civility has two parts: generosity, even when it is costly, and trust, even when there is risk.*
4. *Civility creates not merely a negative duty not to do harm, but an affirmative duty to do good.*
5. *Civility requires a commitment to live a common moral life, so we should try to follow the norms of the community if the norms are not actually immoral.*
6. *We must come into the presence of our fellow human beings with a sense of awe and gratitude.*
7. *Civility assumes that we will disagree; it requires us not to master differences but to resolve them respectfully.*
8. *Civility requires that we listen to others with knowledge of the possibility that they are right and we are wrong.*
9. *Civility requires that we express ourselves in ways that demonstrate our respect for others.*
10. *Civility requires resistance to the dominance of social life by the values of the marketplace. Thus, the basic principles of civility—generosity and trust—should apply as fully in the market and in politics as in every other human activity.*
11. *Civility allows criticism of others, and sometimes even requires it, but the criticism should always be civil.*
12. *Civility discourages the use of legislation rather than conversation to settle disputes, except as a last, carefully considered resort.*
13. *Teaching civility, by word and example, is an obligation of the family. The state must not interfere with the family's effort to create a coherent moral universe for its children.*
14. *Civility values diversity, disagreement, and the possibility of resistance, and therefore the state must not use education to try to standardize our children.*
15. *Religions do their greatest service to civility when they preach not only love of neighbor but resistance to wrong.*

³⁵² Ibid., 221-222.

³⁵³ Ibid., 279-285.

This book, along with Carter's numerous other books related to religion and politics,³⁵⁴ validate the biblical and theological reflections in Chapter 3 and their conclusion that the prerequisite to faithful Christian engagement in the public square is a willingness to empty ourselves of our right to have our perceived needs satisfied, whether that takes the form of our right to be heard or simply our right to be right. The thesis of this book thus provides a significant measure by which to evaluate the work of the School Building Solutions Committee.

Finally, Raymond Roberts, a Presbyterian minister who served on a local task force to address the teaching of morals and values in that community's public schools, shares the insights he gained in that service that led to doctoral research in the subject and culminates in his book, *Whose Kids Are They Anyway?*³⁵⁵ Roberts begins by setting the context of the crisis of confidence that threatens American public education and ties its failures to the broader failures of "families, religious institutions, and the larger public to adequately support the education of children."³⁵⁶ In order to examine the subject, Roberts considers five proposals for moral education in public schools. He examines the thought of Leland Howe as representative of those who would provide moral education without reference to normative moral content; Pat Robertson as representative of those who would reestablish

³⁵⁴ Cf. Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: BasicBooks, 1993), Stephen L. Carter, *The Dissent of the Governed: A Meditation on Law, Religion, and Loyalty*, *The William E. Massey, Sr. lectures in the history of American civilization*; 1995 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), Stephen L. Carter, *God's Name in Vain: The Wrongs and Rights of Religion in Politics*, 1st pbk. ed. (New York: Basic Books, 2000), Stephen L. Carter, *Integrity* (New York: BasicBooks, 1996).

³⁵⁵ Raymond R. Roberts, *Whose Kids Are They Anyway?: Religion and Morality in America's Public Schools* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2002).

³⁵⁶ Ibid., 3.

Christian values as normative; Charles Leslie Glenn as representative of those who would reintroduce school choice as a means of selecting which values would be normative; Thomas Lickona as representative of those who would seek to teach a secularized, common morality; and David Purpel as representative of those who would seek to transmit shared cultural beliefs as a means of moral education.³⁵⁷

Roberts approaches this analysis through four elements:

- Anthropological assumptions, which seek to understand the nature of humanity;
- Situational analysis, which seeks to understand, "What's going on;"
- Moral norms, which seek to understand the underlying moral bases for actions; and,
- Loyalties, which seek to understand the agenda behind these actions.³⁵⁸

Having described the five proposals,³⁵⁹ Roberts evaluates them in relation to a pluralistic context—"... [These] theories of religion function as theories of pluralism. That is, each one's theory of what is universal and particular in religion and morality guides them in interpreting America's pluralism."³⁶⁰ Much like Carter, Roberts sees this "decline of civic obligation" as "particularly corrosive for public education."³⁶¹

Roberts continues his analysis of the five proposals by viewing them through their theories of religion. From there, his analysis of their underlying loyalties leads him to conclude that "... differences between theories of religion drive much of the controversy over the proper

³⁵⁷ Ibid., 4.

³⁵⁸ Ibid., 5-7.

³⁵⁹ Ibid., 16-46.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 61.

³⁶¹ Ibid., 69.

role in place of religion in public life. It is apparent that so long as people mean different things by religion they will not agree on the proper role of religion in public life, including public schools."³⁶² Roberts thus promotes a conversation that must take place in this regard, and this conversation should allow religious voices to be heard—"They should not be forced to use the language of nonreligious 'public reason,' although they should be willing to clarify their views so that others can understand them ..."³⁶³

Roberts concludes that the five theories of religion that have been evaluated have been found wanting and ponders how a theory of spheres might affect the conversation between these theories. He points to Stackhouse and five core spheres that Stackhouse refers to as "principalities"—family, economy, politics, culture, and religion. In addition to these five core spheres, Stackhouse also includes six derivative spheres, or "authorities"—law, medicine, education, ecology, technology, and charismatic leadership.³⁶⁴ Having evaluated the context of public education through these spheres, Robert points to the reason for the crisis of confidence in public education—"The theory of spheres teaches that when people lose their confidence in the sphere, other spheres compensate ..." and he sees this happening in public education as parents pursue choice alternatives in the form of home schooling, faith-based schools, charter schools and vouchers. Government, in turn, is compensating with "persistent efforts to reform public education."³⁶⁵

³⁶² Ibid., 94.

³⁶³ Ibid., 94, 95.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 107, 108.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 123.

Roberts describes the condition of religion in the current context as "increasingly private and interior," which in part explains how a study of social capital in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community can find a great deal of faith-based social capital and yet, concurrently, a high degree of interracial mistrust.³⁶⁶ Thus, he sees in public education a meeting place of the spheres wherein each sphere contributes to the common good, but he sees a particular niche for religion.³⁶⁷

In the final analysis, Roberts contributes the recognition of the Christian's ultimate responsibility in faithful discipleship and loving witness to the world in which the follower of Jesus ministers. While "doing it all for the children" has become a throwaway line for politicians of every stripe, nonetheless, the challenge faced by the School Building Solutions Committee remained to safeguard the fundamental right of children in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community to receive a sound basic education.³⁶⁸ This and this alone would be the sole determiner of the Committee's effectiveness, but more importantly, its faithfulness, to the children, and for those members who traced their moral values to their religious faith, to their God.

From this review, a number of insights may be brought to bear on the evaluation of the School Building Solution Committee's work:

³⁶⁶ Ibid., 224.

³⁶⁷ Ibid., 130.

³⁶⁸ Such a right is guaranteed by the North Carolina state constitution and has been the source of litigation surrounding the adequacy of state funding for public education.

- Augustine's concept of two spheres of influence within which human affairs are conducted, each with its attendant loyalties and composed of a fluid composition, forms a foundation upon which all other theological consideration builds.
- Reinhold Niebuhr points his reader to a love that is self-sacrificing in the context of an intimate community and thus provides us with a means to critique a closely guarded self-interest, even in the stead of the disadvantaged.
- Richard Niebuhr, in eliminating once and for all the conceit that one may actually live in full devotion to one's loyalty to Christ, somehow unaffected by the culture in which one has been nurtured and continues to dwell, levels the playing field for those who would recognize the commonality of that cultural allegiance with others and need a firm basis for pursuing the resultant common interests.
- Balancing the perspectives of both Niebuhrs, Hauerwas and Willimon, along with Yoder, call us back 1) from a too easy acceptance of the agenda of the empire, and 2) the facile equation of the empire's criteria of "success" and "effectiveness" with faithfulness to God in Christ, holding forth the Via Crucis as the safeguard to such idolatry.
- Neuhaus argues forcefully for the rightful place of religion in the public square, perhaps most convincingly when he demonstrates that in the absence of substantive religion, the vacuum will be filled by an *ersatz* religion that will prove worse for society than the religion it would hope to replace.
- Skillen provides us with four principles that illuminate the analysis of the case study, namely, that a Christian approach to civic responsibility requires a perspective that allows us to deal with the full reality of politics and government, one that has come to grips with the real history of American politics, one that accounts for its biblical

roots and its place in the Christian tradition, and finally, one that deals both with our highly differentiated society and with our rapidly shrinking world.

- Carter, by drawing us back to the implicit self-sacrificing nature of civility in public relationships, refocuses us on Hauerwas, Willimon and Yoder's perspective on the centrality of the cross in our understanding if we would see Jesus in the work we undertake.
- Roberts calls us to maintain our focus on these children who belong to God, so that our evaluation of the case study does not lose sight of whom the Christians under evaluation were truly called to serve.

CHAPTER 5

PROJECT DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

This thesis proposed to study the work of the School Building Solutions Committee as it struggled to develop and propose a new, consensus-based package of GO bonds for the November 2006 general election. Related literature was assessed in relation to its utility in illuminating the challenges facing the Committee. A particular focus has been bridging the gap between the community's surfeit of faith-based social capital and the dearth of interracial social trust. Also, varying perspectives regarding the role of the Christian in the public square and their underlying biblical and theological bases have been evaluated relative to their fidelity to the Reformed tradition's essential principles.

As described earlier, the core of the thesis is a case study of the work of the School Building Solutions Committee. Based on personal recollections and review of the Committee minutes, the thesis constructed a chronological narrative of the Committee meetings and the interactions of its members that was documented in Chapter 2. As stated in Chapter 1, the case study methodology utilized was exploratory in nature in order to develop insights into possible areas for enhancing the capabilities of Christians to engage in public work rather than to analyze the actions of the participants according to a fixed set of hermeneutic criteria. It adopted what Merriam would describe as a *critical research* orientation—"Drawing from Marxist philosophy, critical theory, and feminist theory, knowledge generated through this mode of research is an ideological critique of power, privilege, and oppression ..."³⁶⁹

³⁶⁹ Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1998), 4.

The emphasis in this thesis, however, driven by the conclusions of its biblical and theological reflection and the literature review, is on the critique of power and the understanding of the participants of politics as the arrangement and maintenance of that power rather than on economic privilege and oppression. As suggested above, the intent of this approach towards case study methodology, i.e., exploratory versus evaluative, was to allow a number of insights and observations to emerge regarding the strengths and the deficits in the understandings of a broad range of Christians engaging the same political context, allowing for analysis of these understandings and what they suggest for the overall mission of the church in the public square. From this point of view, silence speaks just as loudly as words shouted, i.e., the absence of a certain perspective in the church that is present in scripture and the historical understandings of the church can be suggestive of areas in the church's understanding of its mission in its cultural context that require remediation.

Supporting the construction and interpretation of this narrative are interviews of selected individuals, these being members of the Committee and others involved with the events of the narrative. In view of the exploratory nature of the case study described above, these interviews take on a significant role in understanding the varied perspectives that the interviewees brought into the context of the School Building Solutions Committee's work.

Merriam observes regarding interview data:

... both person-to-person and group interviews can be defined as a conversation – but a "conversation with a purpose" ... The main purpose of an interview is to obtain a special kind of information. The researcher wants to find out what is "in and on someone else's mind ... As Patton explains:

We interview people to find out from them, those things we cannot directly observe ... We cannot observe feelings, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot observe behaviors that took place at some previous point in time. We cannot observe situations that preclude the presence of an observer. *We cannot observe how people have organized the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world.* [Emphasis

added.] We have to ask people questions about those things. The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective.³⁷⁰

The objective of these interviews, then, has been to further illuminate the narrative and facilitate interpretation of it. As such, a number of these individuals are persons of Christian faith who understand their faith to inform their engagement in the public square. Merriam describes a continuum for the structure of interviews that ranges from highly structured/questionnaire-driven interviews to unstructured, open-ended, conversational formats.³⁷¹ This thesis utilized the semi-structured style of person-to-person interview.³⁷² The nature of the subject matter and the perceptions of the interviewees suggested the need for probes to be incorporated into the interviews in order to clarify ambiguity that might arise in the responses. Again, Merriam notes:

Probes are questions or comments that follow up something already asked. It is virtually impossible to specify these ahead of time because they are dependent on how the participant answers the lead question. This is where being the primary instrument of data collection has its advantages, especially if you are a highly sensitive instrument. You make adjustments in your interviewing as you go along. You sense that the respondent is on to something significant or that there is more to be learned ...³⁷³

Therefore, while a prepared list of questions was used in order to establish a relatively consistent basis for gathering data, the semi-structured style accommodated the need for deeper probing as necessary. Additionally, those persons interviewed were asked to complete a survey taken from James F. Hopewell's book, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*. The results of this survey are reported in Appendix 1.

The following is a final list of interviewees, along with a rationale for their selection:

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 72.

³⁷¹ Ibid., 72-74.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid., 80.

- Jim Martin – as discussed earlier, Governor Martin has an extensive background in local, state and federal politics. What was not discussed earlier is that Governor Martin is the son of a Presbyterian clergyman and is himself a Presbyterian elder. Also, his late brother, Joe, was a member of the CMS Board of Education. When Joe passed away in June 2006, he was remembered as an influential leader in the business community who had translated his faith into concrete action in the political realm, exhibiting passionate concern in the area of social justice. It seems clear that the household in which these two men were reared placed a premium on engagement of the Christian faith in the public square, and interviewing Governor Martin, among other things, provided insights into how such foundations are built within families.³⁷⁴
- Wilhelmenia Rembert – Dr. Rembert provided a significant counter-balance to some elements of the worldview that supports this thesis. An African-American woman with a doctorate in social work who is a member of a Baptist congregation, Dr. Rembert is a former member at-large and chairperson of the CMS Board of Education and a former member at-large and vice chairperson of the County Commission. In addition to her history as an elected official, she preceded this involvement with a period of educational advocacy.³⁷⁵
- Joe White – as chairperson of the Board of Education, Mr. White was involved early on in the efforts to establish the School Building Solutions Committee in terms of obtaining buy-in to the process. Additionally, he is a Presbyterian elder and a

³⁷⁴ Jim Martin, interview with the author, July 6, 2007.

³⁷⁵ Wilhelmenia Rembert, interview with the author, June 18, 2007.

member of the Board of Directors for the Swann Fellowship, a local faith-based organization formed in 1997 "[whose] mission includes providing information about the importance of achieving and sustaining a quality, equitable, integrated public school system in Charlotte-Mecklenburg ... [seeking] to provide forums for dialogue about diversity, excellence and equity."^{376, 377}

- Lindalyn Kakadelis – reared a Southern Baptist, Ms. Kakadelis is the wife of an associate pastor at Forest Hill Church in Charlotte. A former elementary school teacher, she also represented District 6 on the CMS Board of Education and currently is the Director of the North Carolina Education Alliance, "a resource network providing North Carolinians with comprehensive data on topics affecting K-12 education."³⁷⁸ She also served as a member of the School Building Solutions Committee and was among those voting for its Minority Report.³⁷⁹
- Dan Murrey – a local orthopedic surgeon, Dr. Murrey also served as a member of the School Building Solutions Committee and was very influential in its final recommendations.³⁸⁰
- Kelly Alexander – son of a former North Carolina president of the NAACP, Mr. Alexander grew up in Charlotte during the Civil Rights Movement, experiencing the bombing of his home in 1965.³⁸¹ Mr. Alexander also served as a member of the

³⁷⁶ The Swann Fellowship, *The Swann Fellowship*, <http://www.swannfellowship.org/> (accessed February 9, 2006).

³⁷⁷ Joe White, interview with the author, March 20, 2007.

³⁷⁸ The Swann Fellowship, *The Swann Fellowship*, <http://www.swannfellowship.org/> (accessed February 9, 2006)..

³⁷⁹ Lindalyn Kakadelis, interview with the author, May 25, 2007.

³⁸⁰ Dan Murrey, interview with the author, July 30, 2007.

³⁸¹ Barry Yeoman, "A Taste for Tolerance," *AARP The Magazine*, May-June 2004.

School Building Solutions Committee and like Dr. Murrey, was very influential in its final recommendations.³⁸²

- Tim Morgan – Mr. Morgan is Deputy Executive Director of the Real Estate and Building Industry Coalition in Charlotte and served on the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee. He also served as a member of the School Building Solutions Committee and was among those voting for its Minority Report.³⁸³
- Lee Kindberg – Dr. Kindberg is a chemist by training and director of the environment, health and safety division of Maersk Line in Charlotte. Prior to succeeding Lindalyn Kakadelis as the District 6 representative on the Board of Education, she was an advocate for gifted student education in North Carolina.³⁸⁴
- Arthur Griffin – Mr. Griffin was a former member at-large and chairperson of the Board of Education during the transition from the era of busing to achieve desegregation. Additionally, he is a Presbyterian elder.³⁸⁵
- Molly Griffin – Ms. Griffin is an attorney and currently a full time homemaker. She currently represents District 5 on the Board of Education and serves as its vice chairperson. She is also a Presbyterian elder.³⁸⁶
- Anne Udall – Dr. Udall is the Executive Director of the Lee Institute, which provided project management support to the School Building Solutions Committee. Formerly, she was the Associate Superintendent for Instruction for CMS. Although

³⁸² Kelly Alexander, interview with the author, July 27, 2007.

³⁸³ Tim Morgan, interview with the author, July 27, 2007.

³⁸⁴ Lee Kindberg, interview with the author, February 19, 2007.

³⁸⁵ Arthur Griffin, interview with the author, July 31, 2007.

³⁸⁶ Molly Griffin, interview with the author, March 9, 2007.

Dr. Udall does not profess faith in Christ, as one who has been deeply involved in the development of the collaborative process that was used by the School Building Solutions Committee, and as the daughter of a United States Congressman and presidential candidate, she offered unique insight into the workings of the School Building Solutions Committee as well as regarding the role of religion in the public square from an outsider's perspective.³⁸⁷

- Harry Jones – Mr. Jones is the Mecklenburg County Manager, and it is to Mr. Jones that the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee makes its annual recommendations. This has afforded the author with the opportunity to work closely with Mr. Jones and his staff for a number of years. Mr. Jones was instrumental in the establishment of the School Building Solutions Committee in response to the expressed desire of H. Parks Helms, County Commission Chairman, to establish a consensus-based process for moving past the defeat of the 2005 CMS bond referendum.³⁸⁸

Other proposed interviewees included Rhonda Lennon, Bolyn McClung, Darius and Vera Swann, the Rev. Dr. Ricky Woods and Vilma Leake. However, for various reasons related to schedule conflicts, these individuals were not able to participate. The interviewees were asked a comprehensive list of interview questions, the underlying aim of which was to support or to refute key assumptions of the thesis and to provide insight into the working out of this aspect of Christian faith in praxis. The following questions were asked except in those cases where the semi-structured and in some cases unstructured approach was used:

³⁸⁷ Anne Udall, interview with the author, March 13, 2007.

³⁸⁸ Harry L. Jones, interview with the author, August 13, 2007.

1. Describe your upbringing in relation to matters of faith and describe your current involvement in your faith context.
2. How do you understand Christian vocation?
3. What do you think we mean by the term "politics?"
4. Do you think the public square should be "naked?" Does faithful discipleship require engagement in the public square? If so, how?
5. What do you think the Christian faith might offer to this community's debate regarding public education?
6. When you think of religion in the public square, what impressions come to mind? Have recent efforts by Christians to engage in the public square been "successful?" Is "success" an appropriate measuring stick in this context?
7. Should Christians aspire to and seek positions of power, and if so, how should that power be exercised?
8. How did you come to be involved in the political arena?
9. How have you practiced your faith in your public role? How have you experienced the faith of others in this role?
10. How were you involved in the events leading up to and including the work of the SBSC?
11. Describe some of your key recollections of the events surrounding the work of the SBSC.
12. How closely did you follow the work of the SBSC while its work was ongoing? Can you point to any key turning points or crucial events in its workings?
13. How would you assess the work of the SBSC in terms of 1) its effectiveness and 2) its faithfulness?

The interviews were recorded using digital audio recording. Video recordings were not deemed practical in the settings where the interviews were conducted.

The case study reflection described was subjective in large measure, keyed as it must be to the theological and ethical framework within which the data presented in the case were evaluated. Merriam points to the basic challenge faced in such an evaluation:

... But how can consumers of research know when research results are trustworthy? They are trustworthy to the extent that there has been some accounting for their validity and reliability, and the nature of qualitative research means that this accounting takes different forms than in more positivist, quantitative research.³⁸⁹

This thesis presents a broad range of data, but it also represents, in large measure, the personal recollections and reflections of the author. As such, it is necessary to make the raw

³⁸⁹ Merriam, 198.

data available for critique where practical. Therefore, this accounting for validity and reliability includes a combination of providing the raw data from the Hopewell assessments (presented in Appendix 1 of the thesis), and presenting the case narrative in Chapter 2 as a narrative retelling of the meeting minutes for the School Building Solutions Committee.

However, in the interest of safeguarding the anonymity of interviewees who at times shared candid observations, some personal in nature, a presentation format for these interviews has been chosen that presents the interview responses question by question. In some cases, these responses are identified where such specificity is particularly illuminating to the inquiry, but generally, the responses are summarized in such a manner as to provide a more general picture.

CHAPTER 6

DATA ANALYSIS

As detailed in Chapter 1, this thesis seeks to address a central research question, namely, how does a Christian act faithfully in the public square, particularly in contexts such as the thoroughly conflict-ridden one surrounding the defeat of the November 2005 CMS bond referendum. This thesis proposed to examine the role of the Christian in the public square by means of thorough theological and ethical reflection on a concrete instance of engagement in the public square by people of Christian faith—a case study of the work of the School Building Solutions Committee that was appointed to develop a consensus-based capital funding recommendation for schools that the community would support.

This effort begins with understanding the leadership context for the case. A significant consideration in evaluating the work of the School Building Solutions Committee is the organizational structure that was selected by the design team to give form to the Committee's work. Initially, the Committee was born of a hallway conversation between County Commission chair Parks Helms and Mecklenburg County Manager Harry Jones following the 2005 bond referendum defeat. Essentially, Chairman Helms expressed his belief that a group to develop a consensus recommendation on CMS bonds was needed to produce a package that would garner strong support in the community.

Moving from this conversation, Mr. Jones engaged members of his staff and senior members of CMS staff in consultation with Anne Udall, Executive Director of The Lee Institute, the organization that provided facilitation and project management services for the

Committee.³⁹⁰ Dr. Udall, in turn, engaged David Chrislip, a family acquaintance, formerly with the American Leadership Forum, to consult with the design team for the Committee.³⁹¹ Mr. Chrislip significantly impacted the structure of the Committee's work, and so understanding his philosophy regarding collaborative leadership is crucial to understanding the School Building Solutions Committee's "DNA."

In Chapter 1, Chrislip and Larson's description of the growing crisis in civic engagement was noted:

A growing sense of anomie pervades the conventional wisdom about the role of citizens in politics. This way of thinking holds that citizens no longer care about public life. They have no sense of civic duty or public purpose. They are apathetic and have no desire to participate in public concerns. Efforts to counter this breakdown usually look no deeper than reforms designed to improve faith and participation in electoral politics. Few people take the time to listen to and understand how Americans really about politics and the role they want to play in public life ...

... Rather than being apathetic and unconcerned, citizens are angry and frustrated by politics as usual. They feel cut out of the process, unheard and unable to see how they can have any real impact on public affairs. Government is out of the reach of ordinary citizens. It does not respond to the concerns and needs of individuals, neighborhoods, or communities but to interest groups and power players ...

... But citizens desperately want to be engaged in public life. They want their views to be heard, understood, and considered. They want to have a sense that their involvement can make a difference, that the *public*, not governments or interest groups, defines the public interest ...³⁹²

In particular, they note public education as one arena in which the need for public re-engagement is strong and is coming to be recognized.³⁹³ They point to a different means of engagement that holds promise for such re-engagement:

³⁹⁰ Harry L. Jones, interview with the author, August 13, 2007.

³⁹¹ Anne Udall, telephone conversation with the author, August 13, 2007. The Lee Institute is affiliated as a program sponsor with the American Leadership Forum's chapter in Charlotte. (Cf. The Lee Institute, *The American Leadership Forum*, <http://leeinstitute.org> (accessed August 13, 2007).) In addition to Dr. Udall's prior friendship with Mr. Chrislip, they had also worked together through the American Leadership Forum.

³⁹² David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson, *Collaborative Leadership: How Citizens and Civic Leaders Can Make a Difference*, 1st ed., *An American Leadership Forum book* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994), 3.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, 7-8.

There is a fundamental premise—we call it the collaborative premise—that undergirds these efforts: there is a belief that if you bring the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization or community. Underlying this premise is an implicit trust that diverse people engaged in constructive ways and provided with the necessary information to make good decisions can be relied upon to create appropriate answers to the most pressing problems.³⁹⁴

This is the philosophy that undergirded the School Building Solution Committee's structure and ground rules. By pooling together a diverse group of persons appointed by elected officials (and thus representative of the political interests of various constituencies in the community) under the leadership of a strong individual who could bring credibility to the effort by virtue of his personal reputation and history in the community, and then allowing that individual to select nine other applicants to serve on the Committee based on his own sense of the need to provide balance to the Committee, the design team established a broad enough and diverse enough group to give it credibility as speaking for the community. The incorporation of ground rules that leveled the playing field and ensured the best possible chance for consensus building in such a diverse group furthered that process and increased the likelihood of the group's success.

Bolman and Deal propose four frames through which to understand organizations:

... we have consolidated major schools of organizational thought into four perspectives. There are many ways to label such perspectives. We have chosen the label *frames*. Frames are both windows on the world and lenses that bring the world into focus. Frames filter out some things while allowing others to pass through easily. Frames helps us order experience and decide what to do. Every manager, consultant, or policymaker relies on a personal frame or image to gather information, make judgments, and determine how best to get things done.³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 14.

³⁹⁵ Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*, 2nd ed., *The Jossey-Bass Business & Management Series* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1997), 12.

They describe these four frames as follows:

- **Structural**
... the structural frame emphasizes goals, specialized roles, and formal relationships. Structures—commonly depicted by organizational charts—are designed to fit an organization's environment and technology. Organizations allocate responsibilities to participants ("division of labor") and create rules, policies, procedures, and hierarchies to coordinate diverse activities. Problems arise when the structure does not fit the situation. At that point, some form of reorganization is needed to remedy the mismatch.³⁹⁶
- **Human resource**
The *human resource frame*, based particularly on ideas from psychology, sees an organization as much like an extended family, inhabited by individuals who have needs, feelings, prejudices, skills, and limitations. They have a great capacity to learn and sometimes an even greater capacity to defend old attitudes and beliefs. From a human resource perspective, the key challenge is to tailor organizations to people—to find a way for individuals to get the job done while feeling good about what they are doing.³⁹⁷
- **Political**
... the political perspective ... sees organizations as arenas, contests, or jungles. Different interests compete for power and scarce resources. Conflict is rampant because of enduring differences in needs, perspectives, and lifestyles among various individuals and groups. Bargaining, negotiation, coercion, and compromise are part of everyday life. Coalitions form around specific interests and change as issues come and go. Problems arise when power is concentrated in the wrong places or is so broadly dispersed that nothing gets done. Solutions arise from political skill and acumen—as Machiavelli suggested centuries ago in *The Prince*.³⁹⁸
- **Symbolic**
The *symbolic frame*, drawing on social and cultural anthropology, treats organizations as tribes, theaters, or carnivals. It abandons the assumptions of rationality more prominent in the other frames. It sees organizations as cultures, propelled more by rituals, ceremonies, stories, heroes, and myths than by rules, policies, and managerial authority. Organization is also theater: actors play their roles in the organizational drama while audiences form impressions from what they see onstage. Problems arise when actors play their parts badly, when symbols lose their meaning, when ceremonies and rituals lose their potency.³⁹⁹

It becomes abundantly clear when viewed through the lenses of these organizational frames that the strategy pursued by the design team needed to address all four frames adequately in order to succeed in the context in which it was developed, and in large measure, it did. The collaborative leadership paradigm adopted sought to ensure that diverse participation was

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 13-14.

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 14.

³⁹⁸ Ibid.

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

reflected in the structure of the Committee. In looking at a number of cases of collaborative efforts deemed successful, Chrislip and Larson point to certain factors that were key to their success. Among these they point to the support or acquiescence of "established" authorities or powers.⁴⁰⁰ This was accomplished structurally by the decision, first, to provide an appointment for each elected official in Mecklenburg County, but second, to provide a means to remove any perceived imbalance in that diverse representation through appointments by the chairman.

Chrislip and Larson point to strong leadership of the process as another key to successful collaboration.⁴⁰¹ Simply expanding the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee membership to incorporate additional input on an ad hoc basis would not work in this case. That committee, while well-known to the County Commission as their appointed advisory committee on the County's capital budget, as well as to CMS staff and the Board of Education, generally operates behind the scenes and until the present time has not been much in the public eye.⁴⁰² It was clear from the onset that a strong leader with broad public recognition and credibility would be needed if this very public effort was to stand a chance of success. Although a number of persons were considered for this role, Jim Martin's name soon came to the fore.⁴⁰³ Given the depth of emotion surrounding the Committee's work and the prominence of its members in the community in general and in their respective constituencies in particular, it is difficult to conceive of any individual who would have been

⁴⁰⁰ Chrislip and Larson, 53.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid.

⁴⁰² While the committee's meetings and documents are completely open to the general public, the public must first be aware of the committee's existence and role before it can engage in its deliberations.

⁴⁰³ Harry L. Jones, interview with the author, August 13, 2007.

able to lead such a group any better than Jim Martin with his reputation for personal integrity, his depth of experience and his basic grace under pressure.

Consideration of the human resources frame was particularly important in the work of the design team. As mentioned, strong emotions surround the public education system in Charlotte-Mecklenburg, emotions based on several generations of history in the community, reflecting a microcosm of the southern United States as it deals with centuries of interracial distrust that continues to burden its efforts to progress beyond its past. Such a context points to the very needs, feelings and prejudices of which Chrislip and Larson speak. For the design team in general and Jim Martin in particular to operate in a rationalistic vacuum that failed to take this setting into consideration would have doomed the Committee's work to failure before it even began its work.

Yet, even in its subsequent work, it would be necessary to ensure that no particular faction came away from the process feeling either that its perspectives had not been heard, that it had railroaded into compromise with which it could not reconcile itself with integrity, that it simply had not had enough time to consider the full implications of a position or that shades of gray had been rendered starkly in black in white in these decisions. Thus, a significant safeguard against these considerations was the Committee's agreement from the onset to seek a *strong* majority in support of its final recommendations. Additionally, the use of green, red and yellow cards during the voting process, signifying approval, disapproval and not having come to a final decision, respectively, allowed Committee members the means to express ambiguity in their decision process.

It almost goes without saying, given the context, that the political frame dominated the work of the Committee. The design team had to consider the means to allow the "[different] interests [competing] for power and scarce resources" for the bargaining, negotiation, coercion, and compromise to take place. By providing a structure that broadened and diversified the representation, the Committee members could indeed form coalitions around their concerns without radicalizing the outcome due to concentration of power in the wrong places. By selecting a strong leader with no other personal interest than coming to the assistance of a community he had served faithfully for so many decades but in which he no longer resided, the Committee benefited abundantly from the deep reserves of political skill and acumen Jim Martin brought to the situation. By choosing not simply to expand an existing advisory committee that did not possess that degree of power and skill, it prevented that power from being so broadly dispersed that nothing would get done.⁴⁰⁴

It is difficult, given the context, to separate the political from the symbolic frames as they affected the design of the Committee. The history of the community, particularly as regards race relations, is rife with symbolic and material insults and injuries for its African-Americans citizens. These perceptions are so intricately intertwined with the history of the public education system that it is impossible to engage in a dialogue around these issues without revisiting that history in some manner. Memories of Brooklyn, a vital African-American neighborhood in the midst of Second Ward, the southeast quadrant of the center city, that was cleared out as part of urban renewal in the 1960s, and its adverse effects on African-American Charlotteans still linger in the corporate memory.⁴⁰⁵ The design of the

⁴⁰⁴ Bolman and Deal, 14.

⁴⁰⁵ Arthur Griffin, interview with the author, July 31, 2007.

Committee's proceedings needed to allow room for that drama to be rehearsed and played out, and it did. The need for the credibility and openness of the process as well as the need for a forum in which mistrust and skepticism could be met and addressed was met by the very public nature of the Committee's proceedings. Representatives of the local news media were present at the Committee meetings, providing the broader community with the opportunity to witness the very real but necessary theater of the Committee members playing their respective dramatic roles on behalf of their constituencies.

Thus, the design team, in developing a process of collaboration for the work of the School Building Solutions Committee appears to have chosen a process that at least conceptually addressed the essential elements of Bolman and Deal's four frames. Regardless of the outcome, the design team could not be faulted for having developed an inadequate or short-sighted process to support the difficult work that would face the Committee. At some point, the outcome would become the responsibility of the participants and those who had appointed them.

Having considered the leadership context of the case, the analysis of the case proceeds to the case narrative as augmented by the interviews. The interview questions were structured in such a manner as to move from the general to the particular. Thus, the questions began by asking the respondents to describe the context of their upbringing in relation to faith, and then moved towards asking them progressively more specific questions regarding their understanding of the relationship of faith to political engagement, concluding with their personal recollections of events surrounding the work of the School Building Solutions Committee.

In Chapter 5, a number of means were described by which this central thesis would be examined. First, in order to understand the worldviews of the interviewees and of the group in aggregate, the methodology of James F. Hopewell in *Congregation: Stories and Structures* was used by means of a survey instrument. The results of the survey are discussed in Appendix 1. Second, when combined with the responses of the interviewees, a fuller picture of the manner in which these participants experienced the process emerged. Therefore, using the interview questions as a framework, the events of the case study narrative presented in Chapter 2 are explored in combination with the perspective of the author as an observer-participant and in light of the biblical and theological reflections and conclusions of Chapter 3 and the literature review of Chapter 4.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the interview style was semi-structured, and in the case of two interviewees, Dan Murrey and Arthur Griffin, the interview departed considerably from the predetermined questions. In the case of Dr. Murrey, these questions were, for the most part, answered in a very thorough manner, speaking in general and specific terms about issues related to the formal questions, so that in many cases, when the time came to ask one of the formal questions, it has already been answered in response to a previous question. In the case of Mr. Griffin, the interview did not use the formal questions at all and instead took the form of a conversation around his recollections of events leading up to the 2005 bond referendum and his reaction to the theological reflections of this thesis.

The following are summations of the interviewees' responses to the interview questions:

1. *Describe your upbringing in relation to matters of faith and describe your current involvement in your faith context.*

The responses to this question yielded the typical Protestant denominational spread that one would expect in the southern United States, i.e., a mix of Southern Baptist Convention, United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and American Baptist Church adherents.⁴⁰⁶ The interviewees described their upbringing as follows:

- Kelly Alexander was reared in Presbyterian, Primitive Baptist and Missionary Baptist congregations and remains a member of that Missionary Baptist congregation where he has belonged since the age of 9.
- Arthur Griffin was reared in a Baptist congregation but became a Presbyterian after he married.
- Molly Griffin was reared in the Moravian tradition and as an adult has been a Presbyterian until recently. At the time of the interview she was seeking a smaller congregation in which to worship and was considering a return to her Moravian roots.
- Lindalyn Kakadelis was reared a Southern Baptist. Her first Christian commitment was made as a seven year old child sitting at the kitchen table

⁴⁰⁶ The Association of Religion Data Archives, *County Membership Report, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, Denominational Groups, 2000*, http://www.thearda.com/mapsReports/reports/counties/37119_2000.asp (accessed March 25, 2008). The dramatic increase in Roman Catholic adherents in the area over the past 25 years has supplanted both PC(USA) and UMC adherents as the second and third ranking denominations represented in Mecklenburg County.

with her mother. She is married to a Southern Baptist minister who came to be an associate pastor at Forest Hill Church, formerly a congregation of the Presbyterian Church(U.S.A.) and of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church but currently independent. Since the time of the interview, she and her husband have begun a church plant in the Ballantyne area of south Charlotte.

- Lee Kindberg looks to the faith of her grandfathers when she speaks of the origins of her Christian faith. One grandfather was a physician who was Methodist, while the other grandfather was a Southern Baptist minister. As a result, she grew up attending worship services with each set of grandparents on alternating Sundays. She recalls growing up in Birmingham, Alabama during that city's period of racial turmoil and spoke of "wandering" during her 20s. As a scientist holding a Ph.D. in chemistry and a corporate manager of accomplishment, she struggled with the messages regarding the role of women that she heard in the Southern Baptist congregations she attended as a young adult and mother. At this time, she and her husband worship in a United Methodist congregation.
- Jim Martin is the son of a Presbyterian minister, and as noted in Chapter 5, he and his brother, Joe, were both drawn to lives of service in the public square. He met his wife, Dotty, at a church camp. He spoke passionately regarding the challenge he experienced as a scientist and college professor in the late 1950s and early 1960s as the cultural split between science and religion became more pronounced, particularly with regard to the debate

over creation and evolution. He has served as a Presbyterian deacon and elder and currently worships in a Presbyterian congregation. An accomplished musician, Governor Martin has written and performed church music, both as an instrumentalist and as a tenor vocalist, and he continues to teach Sunday School classes, particularly classes regarding the relationship between faith and science. As noted earlier, his brother, Joe, succumbed to the effects of ALS in 2006, and Governor Martin spoke of the significant effect on his faith as Joe struggled with the effects of the disease.

- Tim Morgan described his upbringing as "a typical Presbyterian youth upbringing." His mother served as a deacon, and his father served both as a deacon and as an elder. Although he and his wife, Janet attended sporadically as newlyweds, they became more regular in their attendance at a later point in time. In particular, Tim spoke of the enormous support they received as they dealt with having a child with significant health issues to which she eventually succumbed at an early age, and how the congregation supported them following her death. Tim is a Presbyterian elder, and Janet has served on the capital campaign for the Presbyterian congregation in which they worship. They have been involved with the church youth group, and Tim has been particularly active as a Boy Scout leader with the troop that meets at that congregation.
- Dan Murrey was reared in a small Methodist congregation in middle Tennessee. He finds himself drawn by the intellectual aspects of faith and

expressed a love of ideas and learning. This led him to pursue an undergraduate major in religion at Davidson College, and in addition to graduating from Harvard Medical School, he also earned a Master of Public Administration degree from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. He and his family currently worship in a Southern Baptist congregation.

- Wilhelmenia Rembert was reared in a non-denominational African-American congregation in Sumter, South Carolina as part of an avid church-going family, but she also spoke of attending a number of the surrounding churches in addition to her own congregation. In particular, she noted one congregation that influenced her that had a very strong civil rights focus. At this time she is a member of First Fellowship Ministries, a non-denominational African-American congregation.
- Anne Udall spoke of her mother being the spiritual bedrock in her family. Although her father's family was devoutly Mormon with roots going back to the founding of that faith, with her parents' divorce, she was aware of that history but never affiliated herself with that tradition. As an adolescent and as an adult she has explored a number of Christian traditions. She believes in God and holds deep moral convictions, but she does not identify herself as a Christian, speaking more in terms of God in the language of "higher power" and of herself as a person of deep faith in that higher power.

- Joe White was reared in a Methodist congregation, and while attending Wake Forest University, he met his wife, who was Baptist. For the two of them, Presbyterianism became the compromise position, and they have been active in two mainline Presbyterian congregations in the community during their years here. "Coach" White has also served as a Presbyterian elder and speaks of rearing his own children in a Presbyterian congregation where the pastor served for almost thirty years, a fairly uncommon longevity in that denomination. That pastor also served as the chaplain for the Olympic High School football team during Coach White's tenure as football coach and athletic director there.

The responses to this question highlight two things. First, all of the interviewees were reared in the church with the exception of Dr. Udall, and in her case, even then there was a clear, early spiritual longing that yearned to be expressed and an intentional effort by her mother to expose her to religious traditions along the way during her childhood. The interviewees, then, would generally seem to fit the type of believer who has grown up in the church their entire life and had never known a time when they were not aware both of God's love and of that love as expressed in a community of faith. While this type of personal narrative is quite common in the church, nonetheless, with the exception of Lindalyn Kakadelis' point of decision at the age of 7, it was surprising in a faith that speaks of *metanoia* so frequently in its biblical and theological witness not to hear anyone speaking of similar conversions in their world view. Second, because of the large number of Presbyterian adherents and perhaps a Reformed influence even in the Baptist adherents, the choice to

interpret the data through the lens of the Reformed tradition is validated as appropriate to this study.

2. *How do you understand Christian vocation?*

The responses to this question were likewise mixed among the interviewees.

Although some respondents had very well-defined understandings of this concept, for most of them, this understanding was not as clearly articulated. For example, some interviewees, in spite of Protestant orientations, did not see their own professions as being Christian vocations, instead understanding the term to refer to church professionals and ordained clergy, suggesting that in spite of acknowledging the Protestant doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, they were not able to apply that understanding to their own professional work. For instance, one respondent saw his work as "I think that my job ... is more professional ... I come to work with a set of beliefs, which are values that I have, and if you have strong Christian values, then you will use those values in your work with it being obvious but without your Christian values necessarily being overt." Another interviewee responded that, "I think there are different levels for that ... sort of a literal sense where people make their living at a Christian church-related activity," and when asked if they considered what they do a Christian vocation, the response was a clear and emphatic "No."

On the other hand, another respondent said, "Well, I know what it says in the Book, but for me it's what feels right ... there are a lot of things you can do, but some of them just don't feel right, so you don't do them or if you start down that path and you begin to feel uncomfortable with it, maybe that's not the right path to go down

... you need to look for something that has that balance ... call it a 'psychic balance.'" When asked if they considered what they do a Christian vocation, the response was, "I kind of think that everything that I do in some form or another touches on my upbringing, my training in the church and the plan that God has for me ... it's not something that I consciously do a lot of thinking about but it's something that I think is there."

Some interviewees saw the phrase in broad terms, referring to an unquantifiable, all-encompassing sense of God's direction, a thorough grounding and formation of a worldview, a calling by degrees of vocation and perhaps most surprisingly, as something having nothing to do with church. Others understood Christian vocation in terms of how one relates to others and a responsibility of Christians to live their lives in the context of what they believe. For example, two respondents in particular described Christian vocation in terms of conducting their business and personal affairs in a manner that recognizes that they are Christians, people know this, and they are watching them and their professional and personal conduct with that in mind. Others saw the concept in terms of an obligation of Christian discipleship to share one's talents for the benefit and betterment of society and in terms of calling. Taken as a whole, however, although the specific ability to articulate certain doctrinal aspects regarding Christian vocation was not always evident, the respondents demonstrate the Pauline view of the Christian obligation to live their *politeuma* in light of the gospel.

3. *What do you think we mean by the term "politics?"*

Again, the views presented were varied:

- The method by which we determine how we meet the needs of the community, incorporating majority rule while ensuring minority rights.
- The business of the polis.
- A mixture of negotiating, power, control, and strategy, but most importantly, relationships.
- The means of qualifying for the authority to represent the people. This can be hereditary, authoritarian or representative, and it can be both dirty and clean because such is human nature. As a result, "most politicians are as reasonably honorable as most people are."
- An elected body; the ability to influence and lead.
- Public discourse versus gamesmanship; consensus often leading to "impure" compromise; coming together and talking until everyone can live with the result.
- The extent to which we attempt to influence others; dynamic and circular.
- Everything is political; an inevitable, natural part of social interaction; how one accomplishes a public agenda and how that gets done is what we call politics.
- One's philosophy of the role of government.

The general outlook of the interviewees, then, was in large measure communitarian, understanding politics primarily to refer to the manner in which people determine the way they are going to live together in community. However, an interesting

aspect of the understandings and views shared in response to this question was that the issue of power over others seemed almost to be the "elephant in the room" about which no one seemed ready to speak at length. Perhaps more telling was the fact that at no point did anyone raise the image of servanthood. Given the contrast Jesus posed in Matthew 20 between the rulers of the Gentiles lording their authority over them and the image of the Son of Man coming to serve and giving his life a ransom for many, the absence of that imagery being articulated is a concern that may bear further consideration.

4. *Do you think the public square should be "naked?" Does faithful discipleship require engagement in the public square? If so, how?*

The response to this question was a unanimous and unequivocal "no." One interviewee raised a distinction between pluralism and secularism, noting that, "We are a cauldron of contradiction, but essentially a Christian cauldron." With regard to faithful discipleship requiring public engagement, these were "part and parcel of the same thing." Another interviewee suggested that "the salt is better out of the saltshaker," and even suggested that churches should have committees engaging political issues, much in the manner of the "salt and light committee" at the Saddleback Church.

Some of the interviewees echoed Neuhaus' concern for a naked public square that in reality only substitutes an ersatz religion. To require the public square to be devoid of religion would be to impose a religion of irreligion and the ideals of atheism, and such a system would actually inhibit the free exercise of religion. For others, this was

a case where actions spoke louder than words, and for some, the feeling was that such a calling was not for everyone. However, for yet others, in the context of biblical passages like Micah 6:8—"He has shown you what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?"—it is impossible to accomplish this apart from such engagement because justice carries with it an obligation to act when people are mistreated.

5. *What do you think the Christian faith might offer to this community's debate regarding public education?*

This question brought forth a number of different biblical paradigms that might flavor a public debate. The call to love neighbor as self was a common theme raised, and the ability to be patient regarding one's own needs, such as discussed in Philippians 2, was mentioned. Also fascinating was the suggestion by one interviewee that the image of the early church sharing the common meal in the Eucharist and its more egalitarian approach towards persons taking a turn in leading worship, might serve as a worthy image for a broader context of community outside the church. Given modern Christianity's emphasis on the preached Word and the renewal of interest during the latter part of the 20th century in the kerygmatic aspect of the sacraments in liturgy, this seems to be an independent affirmation quite apart from these theological discussions that many in the laity also recognize the significance of this imagery.

The influence of religion to enable persons to see themselves as part of a broader community was mentioned. Apart from the foundation of knowing what we believe,

it was hard to make decisions regarding difficult issues. Likewise, Jesus' appeal to whatever we do for "the least of these," and the concept of service and the giving of one's self were very common touchstones. The long Presbyterian tradition of leadership was held to be a highly prized value for effective citizenship, as well as the value of the acquisition of skills apart from those necessary to maintain the community's food supply were discussed, as well as the view that religion should advocate for all parties involved rather than experiencing the divisions between those advocating exclusively for one party or the other.

The Christian faith was also seen to offer a great deal in terms of the need to be patient and kind, "all those things that love includes." However, perhaps the most unique perspective offered was that "history is a place of *reference*, not a place of *residence*." In other words, in the long history of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's grappling with issues of race and education, it was believed that the Christian faith provided a worldview that could value the perspective of history without tying the discussion down in a static debate.

6. *When you think of religion in the public square, what impressions come to mind? Have recent efforts by Christians to engage in the public square been "successful?" Is "success" an appropriate measuring stick in this context?*

It is both telling and unfortunate that the impressions shared were almost uniformly negative. Gut reactions regarding "crazy arguments over superficial side arguments [when we] ought to be about doing good," controversial politic arguments, the sense that culturally, we are not having an impact when churches in other nations are sending missionaries *here*, images of Bible-thumping preachers breeding cynicism,

and a lack of openness to other perspectives and the preaching of intolerance all spoke to an overwhelmingly negative image of the manner in which religion is seen in the public square. And yet, others felt that in the United States the influence of religion has generally been positive, citing the First Amendment as an example of how no other nation allows a greater degree of religious freedom and how political leaders in the United States tend to be religiously oriented.

This suggests, and James Davison Hunter's earlier discussion reviewed in Chapter 4 would tend to confirm, that the negative view of religion in the public square is largely a modern media creation, and if one takes a longer historical view of the influence of religion in the public square a much more balanced perspective results. Therein lies the challenge to the Christian church if it would pursue its place in the Agora—if Leonard Sweet is correct and we do live in a pre-Christian cultural context, then Christians entering the public square under the church's flag rather than as individuals must overcome this negative portrayal and recognize their obligation to do so rather than receiving the cultural pass from explaining themselves that they might have received in the past.

What was surprisingly missing in these responses was a judgment regarding the "success" of the Christian faith and whether that even constituted a valid metric. The closest that a response came to addressing this was the response noting the church's lack of societal impact such that foreign missionaries now come to the United States to convert the culture that once sent missionaries there to convert them. A possible conclusion from this may be that in view of the overwhelmingly

negative perception of religion's ventures into the contemporary public square, the respondents do not perceive these efforts to have been successful. However, with regard to whether or not success is an appropriate measure in this context, the responses were largely silent.

7. *Should Christians aspire to and seek positions of power, and if so, how should that power be exercised?*

Generally, the response to the first part of this question was overwhelmingly in the affirmative. However, the exercise of power generally elicited an air of cautious apprehension. One respondent believed that historically, both answers, i.e., yes and no, were appropriate because these matters were often dependent on person, issue and time, suggesting the element of calling to such service by God for a particular role. America is not a theocracy, that respondent stated, suggesting a need to exercise extreme caution not to attempt to impose a system of belief on the broader culture. The public square needed to have enough room for everyone in order to enable polity to flourish. For another respondent, the image of "aspiration" was troublesome, suggesting how easily it becomes to confuse calling and personal ambition. This view was abundantly clear in another interviewee's affirmative response—"... with a philosophy that there is a God, and I'm not him."

However, in relation to the public schools, for example, one respondent cautioned that the church cannot meet all of the needs of that institution, drawing the analogy that a fabric has both warp *and* woof, and that in the same vein in which the public schools cannot and should not be all things to all people, "let's not ask the churches

to be what they aren't either." In that sense, "... church is the starting point, not the add-on." However, another respondent, along the same lines as Neuhaus would suggest, expressed the concern that if Christians do not engage in the public square, someone else will, and the fear of making mistakes should not be a reason to avoid this engagement. As such, yet another respondent urged approaching this engagement cautiously and prayerfully because the misuse of power is a major problem. This poses the need to speak less of positions of *power* and more of positions of *responsibility*. The latter view is far more likely to result in a humble approach.

8. *How did you come to be involved in the political arena?*

Essentially all of the interviewees became involved in the political arena because of their concern about a particular issue, which in turn led them into a more general context.

- Kelly Alexander spoke of being involved in voter registration drives at the age of 8 or 9 and of his family's hallmark in civic engagement.
- Molly Griffin was approached by persons seeking to fill the vacancy when John Tate, a previous member of the Board of Education representing District 5, did not seek reelection.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁷ In a manner that seems typical of Ms. Griffin's approach to leadership, she said no three or four times before finally saying yes. This is certainly not due to any lack of leadership ability on her part, and given Ms. Griffin's centrist political and cultural outlook and her eschewal of the political limelight, one wonders how her context would be affected were she to say yes more often.

- Lindalyn Kakadelis came by way of initially having her children in private schools and teaching in private schools while she and her husband were planting a church in southern California, coming to the realization that continuing to have their children in private school would involve going into debt to do so and choosing then to enroll them in the public schools. Listening to James Dobson on the radio one day, she heard Dobson state that if one's children were in the public schools, one needed to be attending school board meetings. She began to build intentional relationships with the individual school board members⁴⁰⁸ as well as becoming involved in appointed committee work. When her husband was called to a church in Charlotte, whereas she had been leading the children's ministry in their California congregation for eight years, she essentially took a rest from that effort. Having been involved to the degree she had been in California, she continued this involvement in Charlotte, attending school board meetings. Becoming acquainted with Sharon Bynum, an at-large member of the CMS Board of Education at a time prior to district election of a majority of the Board, nineteen months later, she was asked to run for the District 6 seat created when the Board of Education moved to district representation.
- Lee Kindberg relocated to Charlotte from Wilmington, North Carolina, where she had previously attended school board meetings, and continued previous involvement with Parents for the Advancement of Gifted Education (PAGE). As in the case of others, she became involved through various committee appointments and through attending Lindalyn Kakadelis'

⁴⁰⁸ The reader may recall a similar path described in the prologue to this thesis.

district meetings, eventually running for the District 6 seat when Ms. Kakadelis did not seek reelection.

- Jim Martin returned to Davidson College as a chemistry professor and became involved in that community with organizing a baseball program for under-privileged African-American youth there. He resided in the community for roughly five years before he considered running for political office. He ran for Town Council in a non-partisan election and was defeated. Subsequently, he was recruited to run for the Mecklenburg County Commission and was elected to that office. He mentions having referred to that office as a calling at that time, and it was at that point that he recognized that "some people don't like you to do that." As a result, at first he backed away from doing that, but he had no doubt in his mind that was what he was called to do. He also mentioned his own stated philosophy that he would not issue negative campaign ads until his opponent had issued his *third* one, a practice he admitted might be "one-third righteous, two-thirds heathen." (He would not start that process, but then neither would he just be a target.) Eventually, he ran for the United States Congress, where he served for six terms, and for governor of North Carolina, where he served for two terms.
- Tim Morgan's parents were always involved in leadership positions for the activities in which they were involved, and he observed them as being consistent in voting. Mr. Morgan was always involved in leadership positions growing up in the Boy Scouts and in student government in junior high school, high school and college. His goal professionally was to become a city or county manager, but after a few years in assistant manager positions, he

discovered he was "too much of a believer in the private sector" and took the skills he had acquired in the public sector over to the private sector. This in turn led to his engagement in Chamber of Commerce work and his current involvement both as a lobbyist for the real estate and building industry and as a private citizen serving on appointed committees.

- Dan Murrey was involved in student leadership and youth leadership positions growing up and generally speaking, always knew that he was going to be involved in some leadership capacity. This led him and motivated him to seek to understand the things that motivate people and learned mostly by experience rather than other modes of learning. In this process he also learned the importance of community. Thus, a key focus for him has been to understand how one has a personal relationship with God that involves community, but at the same time, he does not believe that the church as community is a sufficient understanding. While he has not held elected office at this time, at the time of the interview he was already contemplating an at-large run for County Commission that is currently underway.
- Wilhelmenia Rembert became involved in politics as an appointee to an ad hoc CMS Board of Education advisory committee and subsequently was appointed to fill an at-large Board vacancy. Afterwards, she was elected to the Board outright in an at-large seat, eventually became vice chair and chair of that Board, and then successfully ran at-large for County Commission and was vice chair of the Commission at the time of the 2005 bond referendum defeat and during the School Building Solutions Committee's work.

- As indicated previously, Anne Udall's family has been involved in politics for several generations. Her father was a United States Congressman and a presidential candidate for the 1976 Democratic nomination. Her uncle was also a former United States Congressman and Secretary of the Interior, and her brother and two cousins are currently running for the United States Senate. While she herself has not served in elected office, she is to be found in the background of many significant community-building efforts in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg community and brings her knowledge of the political processes to bear in those efforts.
- Joe White came to be involved in local politics at the urging of Al Winget, a family friend who formerly played football for him at Olympic High School and with the encouragement of two of his former pastors. Prior to serving on the CMS Board of Education, he served as an at-large member of the Charlotte City Council.

9. *How have you practiced your faith in your public role? How have you experienced the faith of others in this role?*

Responses to this question ranged from those who choose not to express their faith verbally in public to those who are quite comfortable with an overt identification of their Christian faith in their public role. Essentially all of the interviewees expressed in some manner that their faith had guided their decision-making process and had contributed to their desire to work cooperatively with others in the public square and to disagree agreeably. For most, their experience of the faith of others had been experienced in the support they received from their faith community, in whatever

form that community took shape. In particular, Lindalyn Kakadelis spoke of a group of women at Forest Hill Church who covenanted to pray for her while she served on the Board of Education, and Governor Martin spoke of sharing fellowship and prayer breakfasts in the United States Congress and the experience of congregations praying for their elected leaders as being significant to him.

10. How were you involved in the events leading up to and including the work of the SBSC?

The interviewees were a mix of committee members and other elected officials, both serving at the time and some having served.

- Kelly Alexander received a telephone call from District 2 County Commissioner Norman Mitchell asking him if he would be willing to serve, to which he replied in the affirmative.
- Molly Griffin was the District 5 representative on the CMS Board of Education and appointed Chip Boorman to serve on the School Building Solutions Committee.
- Lindalyn Kakadelis was appointed to the School Building Solutions Committee by District 5 County Commissioner Dan Bishop.
- Lee Kindberg was not serving on the Board of Education at the time of the School Building Solutions Committee's work but had served during the period leading up to the 2005 bond referendum defeat.
- Jim Martin was sought out by Anne Udall and Harry Jones to lead the School Building Solutions Committee based on his prior leadership experience and his general appeal as a trusted builder of consensus across party lines.

- Tim Morgan had previously served on the CMS Long Range School Facilities Master Plan Task Force and was an appointee to the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee at the time of the School Building Solutions Committee's work. He was appointed to the School Building Solutions Committee by Ken Gjertsen, the District 6 representative on the CMS Board of Education.
- Dan Murrey was initially selected as an alternate appointee to the School Building Solutions Committee by Governor Martin.
- Wilhelmenia Rembert was an at-large County Commissioner and vice chair of the Commission at the time of the School Building Solutions Committee's work. She appointed Mary Wilson to the Committee.
- Anne Udall, as Executive Director of the Lee Institute, led the project management efforts that supported the design and functioning of the School Building Solutions Committee.
- Joe White was an at-large member and chair of the CMS Board of Education at the time of the School Building Solutions Committee's work. He appointed former City Councilman Malachi Greene to the Committee.

11. Describe some of your key recollections of the events surrounding the work of the SBSC.

Some interviewees recalled some Committee members arriving with preconceptions about the issues related to the Committee's work but saw them come to the realization along the way that accommodation would need to occur. Others recalled vividly the "horse trading" that went on in the process of reaching a compromise solution. Some were impressed by the ability to get a polarized group to agree within

10% of unanimity to move a community forward. The use of the green/yellow/red card system was felt to have been a particularly effective means of bringing about this consensus in allowing the development of interim positions rather than up or down motions. The Committee members generally were able to talk out their differences, although some needed to be restrained somewhat. A measure of humor was effective in this process as well, and nearly everyone involved who had not been involved at that level of detail before came to realize that the school system's needs were far greater than they had thought previously. They also learned that consensus often requires a compromise on details.

Some members recalled the value of having the research from the opinion polls conducted by MarketWise, which showed that there was no singular reason for the failure of the bond referendum and that there were a variety of things CMS needed to do in order to gain credibility with the voters. The facilities visits were seen as effective in making the Committee members aware of the particular needs throughout the community. Some felt that having nine appointments made by Governor Martin made it more difficult to go against the direction in which he was leading the Committee at times. Others recalled seeing the "true colors" of various Committee members come out as the project list was developed, i.e., for all the talk of consensus, when the time came to make those decisions, most members reverted to their advocacy roles for the interests they represented. The use of parliamentary procedure at various points in the process was seen as restrictive to creativity. Some felt that the use of smaller groups was needed in order to gain more cooperation between the members, and a key issue mentioned relative to this was Governor

Martin's opposition to the use of group facilitation. The Committee's use of various experts on the process and history of the bond referendum defeat and on the technical and financial issues regarding school construction and renovation was seen as a positive measure.

12. How closely did you follow the work of the SBSC while its work was ongoing? Can you point to any key turning points or crucial events in its workings?

Those interviewees who were serving as elected officials at the time of the School Building Solutions Committee's work generally maintained their distance from its proceedings in order not to appear to be trying to influence its outcomes.

Nonetheless, they maintained a keen interest in the Committee's work and followed it closely albeit at a distance. Some members of the Committee saw as key the development of lines of communication such as Bolyn McClung's e-mails reporting "findings of fact" that spurred discussion. In that light, the June 15, 2006 meeting at Central Piedmont Community College was seen as significant because by that point the time for posturing had passed, and members from all the different perspectives were trying to find points of commonality.⁴⁰⁹

Some respondents were impressed by Governor Martin's leadership and the ability of the Committee members to achieve compromise, while others characterized the entire process as being "like a basketball game—you only need to see the last five minutes." The appointment of Governor Martin was also seen as significant by some, although not always in a positive light, particularly in view of his selection of

⁴⁰⁹ This would be affirmed by in some measure by Governor Martin's decision to break the tie at the June 23, 2006 meeting in deference to the Committee's work in crafting a compromise at the June 15 meeting.

Committee members and those points in which he handled the split votes. In fact, when Governor Martin made his report on June 27, 2006, it was noted that in the responses of the elected officials, both sides expressed disappointment with the results. The development of a minority report was seen as a major shortfall in the outcome of the Committee's work, and some questioned if perhaps the Committee had been given an additional meeting in which to work out the central disagreement surrounding that report, i.e., the deviation from the CMS priority list in order to elevate certain politically sensitive projects above other higher priority projects, this might not have resulted in a workable compromise that would have yielded a unanimous recommendation.

13. How would you assess the work of the SBSC in terms of 1) its effectiveness and 2) its faithfulness?

For those interviewees who were satisfied with the compromise the Committee worked out, the response was generally favorable. With regard to the Committee's effectiveness, one member characterized it bluntly as "zip." It was acknowledged by some that the community did receive some measure of unity from the Committee's work, but that it was disheartening that neither the Board of Education nor the County Commission embraced its outcome or recommendations, leading to a conclusion of "success because you show up, not because of what you accomplish." While some interviewees initially had high hopes for the process, eventually they were disappointed by what seemed to be a drive towards a predetermined outcome.

Others disagreed, believing that in having succeeded in getting the various groups within the Committee to move forward and ultimately achieving a strong majority,

the Committee had met its primary goal. The Committee was needed for the community to refocus the debate regarding its public schools, and in that process, a diverse group came together and had a rational discussion about the related issues. In this sense, the process worked and ended up without hard feelings between the members and essentially no personal attacks being made by the members towards one another. The Committee was effective in achieving what it set out to do, leaving the job essentially 80-90% complete in one member's view in spite of some element of failure in the final meeting.

Still, others felt that the Committee had provided thorough, solid recommendations that would provide a foundation for future work by others, and this certainly proved to be the case as the community picked up the work of the Committee the following year, whether in the case of the CMS staff using the Committee's recommendation as a starting point or in the case of the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee also using the School Building Solutions Committee's work as the starting point for its recommendations.

In summary, a number of conclusions derive from the interview data:

- The denominational and theological compositions of the interview cut set of Committee members confirms generally expected demographic delineations for a community in the southern United States, and although the interviewees were selected based on the author's personal acquaintance with them as people of faith from prior association, the demographic conformance demonstrated here suggests that these persons would indeed be

representative of the overall make-up of the Committee. As noted earlier, the choice of the Reformed tradition as the theological lens for analysis is thus confirmed as appropriate.

- The group's understanding of Christian vocation, at least as understood within the Reformed tradition, is mixed. While the understanding of the division between clergy and laity regarding vocation is commonly encountered among a general church population, and although this understanding was mixed among those interviewed, it is surprising to see that view held by persons who are clearly active leaders in their congregations.
- The group's definition of "politics" conforms essentially to that of the general population and its civic understandings. While there is an awareness of the need for respecting the views of others, it is difficult to determine whether this originates in any sense from their Christian upbringings, the general popular milieu of tolerance and the need for compromise as currently expressed in the surrounding culture, or a combination of both. The deep influence of Christianity in western culture is difficult to separate from its secular expressions in this regard. However, at no point do the images arising from the Gospels, e.g., Matthew 20, or from Philippians 2 and what these images suggest regarding power appear to have manifested themselves.
- As one might expect in a time when much of public perception is driven by media portrayal, the views regarding how religion is perceived in the public square are overwhelmingly negative. Yet, none of the respondents suggested this led to the conclusion that religion should be excluded from the public square. In fact, they are very much convinced that the Christian faith offers a

mindset of self-sacrifice and communitarian outlook that would benefit the surrounding community. Where this is distinct from the view of power expressed above is that self-sacrifice expressed in divine condescension and that expressed in human condescension are very different matters.

- The distinction between "success" or "effectiveness" as compared to "faithfulness" that is made by Hauerwas and Willimon is not evident in the responses of the interviewees. Given the predominantly deontological and teleological mindsets of most secular and religious ethical paradigms, it is difficult to see how the respondents would react any differently, which in turn suggests that the way the church overall understands these matters in the United States makes it vulnerable to pursuing faithfulness according to metrics indistinguishable from those of the secular world.

The implications of these findings are explored further in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

FINAL DISCUSSIONS

This thesis examines the role of the Christian in the public square through theological and ethical reflection on Christian engagement in the public square. This is accomplished by means of an exploratory case study of the work of the School Building Solutions Committee from March through June 2006 and participant interviews. Questions of theology and praxis examined include:

6. What is meant by the term when one speaks of "politics?"
7. Should the public square be "naked" in general and specifically, relative to the Christian faith, and does faithful discipleship require engagement in the public square?
8. What unique insights might Christian theology offer in relation to public education and what would these insights sound like in a "clothed" public square?
9. How have previous efforts by Christians in the public square fared historically, i.e., have they been "successful," and is "success" even an appropriate measuring stick in this context?
10. Should Christians aspire to and seek positions of power, and if so, how should that power be exercised?

The central research question explored is how Christians may act faithfully in the public square, i.e., how does one's faith in Christ influence one's position and decision-making.

Summarizing the learnings of this thesis involves two areas of consideration. First, a review of key events of the case presented in Chapter 2 assesses the work of the School Building Solutions Committee. Second, a similar review of the data gathered from the interviews presented in Chapter 6 assesses the underlying biblical and theological understandings of those individuals in relation to engagement in the public square. Together, these learnings are reviewed using the biblical and theological categories discussed in Chapter 3 and insights gleaned from the literature reviewed in Chapter 4.

Looking at events in the case narrative presented in Chapter 2, certain key themes related to the engagement of Christians in the public square emerged. These are as follows:

1. *Absent agreement on differing views and understandings of what constitutes social justice, parties engaged in negotiations around these views will revert to familiar community loyalties rather than loyalty to a "re-visioned" community.*

It is difficult to unite a group around social justice when the various parties cannot come to agreement on what constitutes justice. If justice is understood loosely as each party receiving what it needs, it is a simple matter to understand the one-sided justice that involves the self getting what it wants. It is an entirely different matter, however, to understand the more holistic justice that entails ensuring that the *other* also receives what they need. *Mispat*, as understood in the scriptures, is that type of justice, where everyone who thirsts can come to the waters, and those that have no money can come and buy wine and milk without money and without price. (Is. 55:1)

Unfortunately, divine justice and human justice differ significantly in this respect—for everyone to buy wine and milk without money and without price, someone must give up something. More often than not, human justice comes with a price. That price is sacrifice, and sacrifice without the choice to do so is coercion.⁴¹⁰ While the compromise reached in the June 15, 2006 meeting at Central Piedmont Community College was a significant achievement, one that eventually led Governor Martin to break the June 23, 2006 tie in its favor, there remained those within the group who were unwilling to consider the compromise as evidence of the attainment of justice.

⁴¹⁰ Stephen Carter would remind us that law is violence, and in the end, the decisions of governing officials to tax are inherently coercive.

Some had never been willing to yield their previously held positions to any noticeable degree, and significantly, some of these persons were those most readily identified as Christians. As a result, there was never going to be a point at which those individuals came to see themselves as part of the larger group. This is not to find fault with those individuals because what is evident is that those individuals continued to see themselves as demonstrating faithfulness to the smaller communities for which they advocated rather than the broader community.⁴¹¹

The June 15, 2006 negotiations represented a great deal of compromise between the varied interests represented around the table. For those who bought into the compromises that were made there and felt that their interests had been heard, considered and taken into account, there was a sense that a community-building spirit had pervaded the group's deliberations. But for those who felt that in the process of moving towards compromise, certain principles they held had been set aside, even ignored, in the interest of "making the deal," what resulted was not a community-building compromise in which each party got a measure of what they wanted. Instead, they saw a predetermined outcome forced down their throats, one that looked very similar to the same sorts of "compromises" that had created the context of ill will leading up to the 2005 bond referendum defeat.

⁴¹¹ Western civilization labors under the conceit that it alone among the world's societies has overcome humanity's inherent tendency towards tribalism when in fact every civil war since Westphalia is a reaffirmation that tribalism remains a strong undercurrent in western societies. Likewise, the wars between nation-states affirm this on a larger scale.

The CMS staff prioritization of projects was not purely objective, and certainly no purely objective prioritization is possible in this context. But it was as close as anyone had ever come in the history of such considerations to developing such a list. A less than perfect but valid alternative for those who disagreed about project priorities was to allow an entity not engaged in advocacy to make decisions regarding project prioritization, and so many of the advocates saw their decision to suspend their own judgments in favor of the CMS staff's prioritization as a step towards compromising their agenda without compromising their principles. When this key principle was set aside in favor of a compromise based elsewhere, those members felt that a significant compromise *on their part* had been betrayed, and from this perceived betrayal arose the minority report faction.

2. *The problem with koinonia, whether in the church or among Christians engaging in the public square, is that it is so very easily counterfeited.*

The members of the Committee, Christian and non-Christian, experienced a "coming together" around the needs of the school system and developed internal community as a microcosm of the broader community. When the Committee began its work in March 2006, most of the Committee members had a steep learning curve in order to become current with the relevant data pertaining to the 2005 bond referendum defeat.⁴¹² Many had no awareness or knowledge of financial instruments such as COPs or GO bonds, student population growth patterns in CMS and in

⁴¹² Rhonda Lennon and Tim Morgan were members of the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee, and Chip Boorman, Wesley Simmons and Malachi Greene had served on the CMS Bond Oversight Committee. These members had in depth and current knowledge of these data. Jerry Fox was a former Mecklenburg County Manager, Malachi Greene and Ralph McMillan were former City Councilmen, and Teresa Williams had formerly served on the Chapel Hill, North Carolina Board of Education. Others had experience or connections with state and federal government agencies. However, in all of these cases, their experience was indirect and not current on the particulars for Mecklenburg County.

many cases, the historical background leading up to the current school construction and renovation crisis. The first few weeks of the Committee's meetings, therefore, were exercises in bringing everyone up to speed with the current context and, in essence, leveling the playing field. The facility tours in early April 2006, whether seeing charter schools, overcrowded suburban schools, or middle ring and urban schools in need of renovation for the first time, had the effect of giving some of the members small epiphanies regarding "how the other half lives." This process was significant because it brought some members of the group together around a common understanding of the situation they were seeking to relieve.⁴¹³

Many members of the Committee experienced a measure of unity in recognizing the needs throughout the community apart from the debates between its advocating members, and when the final meeting was held on June 23, 2006, the primary task of the day was to finalize the Committee's resolution and recommendations. From one perspective, much of the debate surrounding these recommendations had already taken place, so ideally, the Committee should not have had to plow new ground. As a result, a palpable sense of relief must have been felt by those who read more into the June 15, 2006 compromise than might actually have been accomplished. This may have led those persons to believe that unity of purpose had been reached and to confuse that sense of relief with the feeling that the Committee had become a team, indeed, *a fellowship*. Such is always the case when relationship is based on feeling and not on commitment and trust.

⁴¹³ In her interview, Dr. Udall noted this as a significant event in the Committee's work.

A significant amount of dissent still existed around the Committee's departure from the CMS prioritized project list. Rhonda Lennon's proposed amendment to the final resolution did not create a controversy *ex nihilo*. She merely exposed what had always been a fragile and unstable compromise. It is easy for a group, acting under deadline pressure and vulnerable to "group think" to feel exhilaration over breaking an impasse and finally achieving an agreement over something, *anything*, in some cases. As frequently happens in such situations, people will "hold their nose and vote yes" because most people do not wish to be isolated in a minority position, particularly when the specific points of disagreement are nebulous. The amendment simply made clear that the divide between advocates for urban renovation and advocates for suburban construction and innovative reform for CMS would not be amenable to quick fixes.

3. *Justice, righteousness and covenantal love are not accomplished on a timetable because such qualities require time for trust in their relationship to one another to develop.*

Some have suggested that perhaps with more time and a broader base of consensus-building, a project list more palatable to a broader cross section of the community might have been possible, but on the other hand, this certainly was not the case in the years preceding the 2005 referendum, nor has it been the case since then. To expect individuals in a representative democracy to unite around vague concepts of justice absent a spirit of trust that has been earned by a history of concretely fulfilled promises is naïve.

Righteousness was lacking on all sides, that restoration of trusting relationships under the umbrella of Neuhaus' Arbiter Absolute, which this thesis identifies as covenantal

love. In its presence, justice ideally would flourish in response and in concert. In light of this, perhaps the goal of the School Building Solutions Committee could have been to establish concrete measures aimed at building community trust by their fulfillment rather than to develop a consensus-based solution to the problem of school construction and renovation funding. Consensus is reached around principles and trust in fidelity to them; compromise is reached around the fleshing out of those principles. In short, the community asked the Committee to accomplish something it had not accomplished itself. Indeed, the community still has yet to accomplish it. To expect such a process as that engaged in by the Committee to yield a satisfactory outcome for a broader community without developing such trust-building measures was not realistic.

However, the June 27, 2006 presentation to the joint meeting of the Board of Education and the County Commission imposed something antithetical to the working of authentic *koinonia*, which was a deadline. Transformative *koinonia* takes place in the context of *kairos*, not *chronos*. *Kairos* implies inherently that the Ground of covenantal love, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, has providentially ordained the outcome and its appointed time of fulfillment. The outcome obtained in this chronological instance suggests that this essential element was missing.

4. *The human need for mythic heroes easily yields to a false messianic expectation, and the only adequate counterbalance to this false messianism is kenotic servant-leadership, evidenced as the sacrifice of personal desire in obedience to a higher principle.*

Hopewell's central purpose in *Congregation: Stories and Structures* was to demonstrate how a congregation's self-identification could be captured in the narrative it told of itself.⁴¹⁴

Such a narrative could be fit in Northrup Frye's categories, or it could be compared to any number of mythic archetypes in order to provide a window into that congregation's soul. In the case of the Trinity congregation in Atlanta, Georgia, Hopewell compared its story with Joseph Campbell's "journey of the hero" archetype.⁴¹⁵ Jim Martin makes a viable candidate for being cast in such a role and having his actions analyzed from that perspective. A beloved leader who had since gone into political retirement, returning to the world of science and medicine from which he had come, serving on various civic and corporate boards of directors, it would be quite easy to view Governor Martin as an heroic soldier, called forth one more time to lead the people he had served for so many decades out of their moment of crisis.

However, the temptation to declare him "Santo subito!" should be resisted here. First, Governor Martin himself would object emphatically to such a characterization. But second, while this thesis makes no attempt to assess the correctness of his decisions and his actions, nonetheless one must acknowledge that every decision takes place in a context and with limited and imperfect inputs to the decision-making process.

⁴¹⁴ James F. Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 5.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 42.

Governor Martin's tiebreaking vote on June 23, 2006 speaks to a matter of personal integrity, and it can be argued that as such, a measure of faithfulness entered into this decision, both as an individual and as a member of a community.

With the Committee deadlocked over Ms. Lennon's amendment, it fell to Governor Martin to break the tie in favor of one side or the other. Given the choice of breaking the tie in favor of an objective proposal based on a project priority list developed by professionals or in favor of a proposal that was the result of a political process of compromise, Governor Martin chose to honor and give authority to the group's hard work in negotiating a compromise recommendation, which seems counter-intuitive, given the importance of his scientific outlook on objective data.

By voting *against* the amendment, Governor Martin stood against the stated position of those in his own political party, both elected officials and appointees, who believed that the reason for the current crisis in school overcrowding was the result of poor planning and prioritization on the part of CMS. If he had voted *for* the amendment, he would have confirmed the suspicions of many in the community on the other side of the question that "the fix had always been in;" that the "haves" would always continue to take advantage of the "have-nots;" and who believed that the current crisis was one of the community's own making in having first, failed to fund facilities maintenance adequately in the previous twenty years or more and then having abandoned a system of student assignment that, even if it did not exactly yield improved academic outcomes for all, at least it had spread the burden of the inadequate facilities across a broader spectrum.

In the end, it was a "no-win" scenario, and Governor Martin voted against the amendment. But apparently he did so for neither of these purported reasons. Instead, he stated that he believed that some very difficult but fruitful negotiations had transpired during the June 15 meeting, and he felt an obligation to honor the Committee's hard work by supporting the compromise that had been worked out in that meeting. In essence, whether by intent or not, his decision suggests that *the two parties were asking the wrong question to begin with*. Rather than asking which side of the debate was correct, Governor Martin appears to have asked instead *what action best exhibited a bias towards building community and safeguarding it*. It is unclear whether Governor Martin would characterize his actions in such a manner himself, but to the outside observer, such a decision suggests an orientation towards kenotic servant-leadership. This conclusion is reached here because it seems to be the only one apart from a cynical assessment of his motives that explains the positions he consistently advocated during the Committee's work.

Governor Martin's decision says a great deal about the importance of community, both for him and for the broader community. For all of the Reformed tradition's vision of societal and cultural transformation as espoused by H. Richard Niebuhr, on the one hand, and for all of Anabaptism's insistence on uncompromising faithfulness to a new vision for human society that requires withdrawal from or challenge to human structures as espoused by John Howard Yoder and by Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon, on the other hand, both sides are equally correct, and yet both sides also equally *miss the point entirely*. Both sides are asking the wrong question.

5. *The church, not human society, remains the demonstration of the kingdom of God in the world, and biblical justice, righteousness and covenantal love must first find their expressions in that community.*

The foundational point of ecclesiology remains Cyprian's *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, not because the church's blessing is the prerequisite to eternal life, but because, contrary to Reinhold Niebuhr's assertion, while humanity may not "get it right" collectively, we most assuredly will "get it wrong" in isolation. The prerequisite to eternal life in God's kingdom is repentance in the form of setting sin on its head and emptying oneself of any pretense to having the right for the world to work out in the manner in which we ourselves believe it should, such that we derive the benefit for ourselves. This is the basic, uncompromising prerequisite for Christian community, and yet, the church compromises it continually. One is left instead to wonder what transformative effect, what radical, counter-cultural effect such an outlook of faith might have on the church itself and then on the surrounding communities in which God has called it into being. Only God himself knows with certainty whether the decisions or the positions held by Jim Martin were and are the right ones. The same may be said of any of the members' choices, both in the events leading up to this case and those that have transpired since then. In fact, the same may be said of all who live, *simul iustus et peccator*, in a creation that groans in labor until its Creator makes it whole once again.

The responses of the interviewees have been examined in detail in Chapter 6, but in light of the preceding statements, it bears restating that much of the interviewees' responses seem to confirm the conclusions above. The strength that individual Christians such as these bring to the public square lies in their diverse perspectives, which can serve to point out

deficiencies in the perspectives of others, yet in a manner that builds up rather than tears down. However, without pointing to any particular individuals or groups of individuals and without assigning either blame or responsibility, the interviewees highlight two glaring inadequacies that *any* individual Christian or group of Christians in the United States would bring to this or any similar context, and as such, they constitute a growing edge for the church in post-Constantinian western society.

Simply put, the church of Constantine understands neither righteousness nor kenosis as the scriptures describe them. What this church demonstrates time and time again, is that it has limited capability to make disciples who understand these qualities of Christian faithfulness and can exercise them consistently in praxis. The church makes disciples in droves who are able to recognize the reality of diversity and the inherent conflict this may engender, but it consistently demonstrates an inability to make disciples who both understand righteousness as right-relatedness and demonstrate a kenotic approach to resolving that conflict. Instead, the interviews gave evidence of lingering mistrust and the sense that in some cases, church leaders, whether clergy or lay, demonstrated the least humility and willingness to consider alternative views than those they brought into the context with them.

This thesis set out in Chapter 1 to answer a number of research questions that were intended to address a central research question—how does a Christian act faithfully in the public square? These are addressed as follows:

- *What is meant by the term when one speaks of "politics?"*

"Politics" can be defined in a number of ways. Definitions in *The American Heritage Dictionary* range from "The art or science of government or governing, especially the governing of a political entity, such as a nation, and the administration and control of its internal and external affairs" to "Intrigue or maneuvering within a political unit or group in order to gain control or power." However, a useful definition in the context of this thesis is, "The often internally conflicting interrelationships among people in a society."⁴¹⁶ When asked this question, many of the interviewees' responses centered around exactly those types of questions regarding how one conducts "the business of the polis."⁴¹⁷ Even to the extent that issues of power and control entered into their considerations, inevitably politics was seen to revolve around relationships.⁴¹⁸ The author's working definition over the past seven years has been "the art of getting what you want while wanting what you get" because such a view recognizes *a priori* that one does not always get what one wants when one wants it. The alternative to learning how to live in community with less than what one wanted when one wanted it is to exist in a state of continual external and internal conflict, and for a Christian, such a state is not an acceptable outcome.

The relationship between power and authority has been noted previously with the recognition that power is derivative of authority, and others have likewise

⁴¹⁶ *politics*. *Dictionary.com*. *The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language* (4th Edition) (Houghton Mifflin Company), <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/politics> (accessed September 30, 2007).

⁴¹⁷ Molly Griffin, interview with the author, March 9, 2007.

⁴¹⁸ Lindalyn Kakadelis, interview with the author, May 25, 2007.

characterized politics as "a system of qualifying for authority."⁴¹⁹ The key, then, from these perspectives, is understanding the relational aspect of political engagement. Power and authority have been seen not to be the same entity, and if one understands authority from a biblical perspective, understanding the difference between "authority"—ἐξουσία—and "power"—δύναμις—begins with the recognition that authority is fundamentally based in "being," and "being" is essentially a relational quality. It is rooted in relationship to the ground of being, Being itself. With its unique perspective concerning ortho-ontology—"right being"—as expressed in Jesus' summation of the Law and the Prophets in a relational terms, i.e., self to God and self to other selves, the Christian faith has a significant contribution to make in the public square.

- *Should the public square be "naked" in general and specifically, relative to the Christian faith, and does faithful discipleship require engagement in the public square?*

Richard Neuhaus makes a compelling case that the "naked public square" is, in fact, not truly naked at all. Indeed, much like Jesus' parable of an exorcism gone awry, leaving seven devils worse than the one that had been cast out, if religion is cast out of the public square, what Neuhaus terms "*ersatz* religion" will fill the void instead.⁴²⁰ Voltaire's suggestion that, "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him," will have been fulfilled but absent any meaningful moral content.

⁴¹⁹ Jim Martin, interview with the author, July 6, 2007.

⁴²⁰ Richard John Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1984), 80.

The question for Christians, then, is not whether the public square should be naked, for Neuhaus convincingly demonstrates that such a condition cannot truly exist. Rather, the issue is a matter of how the public square will be clothed, and for Christians, this is a question of whether the square will be clothed in a flowing robe without blemish or with a post-Edenic fig leaf. Given the current trajectory of western culture, such an analogy may be more accurate than one would like to admit.

For this reason, engagement in the public square is not and cannot be optional for Christ's faithful disciple. The only real question is what form that engagement should take. The politics of the attainment and maintenance of power, seeking to ensure that "our people," or at least "the right people," i.e., those who will at least tip their hats in the direction our beliefs, may be a perfectly reasonable approach to civic engagement in a Manichaean worldview. But this will not suffice for the disciple of Jesus Christ—"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Mt. 20:25-28, NIV) The distinction that will determine, not whether such engagement is successful or effective, but rather, whether it is faithful, will be its kenotic character.

- *What unique insights might Christian theology offer in relation to public education and what would these insights sound like in a "clothed" public square?*

Raymond Roberts' central insight, the one with which, oddly, he chose to conclude rather than start the conversation in his book, was the answer to the title question,

"Whose kids are they anyway," was "ultimately and finally, they are God's kids."⁴²¹

One would not have expected a Presbyterian minister to have concluded otherwise.

For Hauerwas and Willimon, such a starting point links the Christian to the community of the baptized, but then it raises the question why we have children in the first place and witnesses to our inability to articulate an adequate response. They point to the various inadequate reasons why people have children in our society, but they eventually they conclude with the only adequate rationale—"We have children as a witness that the future is not left up to us and that life, even in a thriving world, is worth living—and not because 'Children are the hope of the future,' but because *God* is the hope of the future."⁴²²

Nonetheless, if all children are God's children, and parents, particularly Christian parents, are but stewards on God's behalf, that foundational insight has much to offer in a "clothed" public square. It strongly suggests that in view of the sovereignty of God, society in general and Christians in particular have a non-negotiable obligation to provide every child under its care with an equitable, sound, basic education. Such an obligation extends to *all* children—not merely those for whom it is easy to provide such an equitable, sound, basic education; not merely those in close proximity to us as regards geography or demography. Conversely, it also extends not merely to those whose poverty affords us a sanctimonious sense of righteousness in having done "for the least of these." In Charlotte, North Carolina,

⁴²¹ Raymond R. Roberts, *Whose Kids Are They Anyway?: Religion and Morality in America's Public Schools* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Press, 2002), 130.

⁴²² Stanley Hauerwas and William H. Willimon, *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 59, 60.

such a starting point would go a long way towards bridging the gap between numerous pockets of educational advocacy.

- *How have previous efforts by Christians in the public square fared historically, i.e., have they been "successful," and is "success" even an appropriate measuring stick in this context?*

Religious influence in society has always experienced ebbs and flows, and the Christian faith has seen its influence come and go as it has been both used and abused throughout its history during the Constantinian era. Still, the current rising tide of hostility towards religion in the public square in general and towards the role of the Christian faith in particular suggests that not only have previous efforts by Christians in the public square fared poorly, they have also been unsuccessful when compared with the goals that were to have been accomplished and the measures of success that have been set around those goals. Recent efforts to "take back our nation" presume that the nation was ever in the "possession" of Christians in the first place. To "take back a nation for God" is to presume that God ever surrendered his sovereignty over it. If "success" is defined as, "The achievement of something desired, planned, or attempted,"⁴²³ then one would have to say unequivocally that recent efforts by Christians in the public square have not been "successful." By every conceivable sociological metric, western civilization is in decline and to some degree in retreat,⁴²⁴ leading Newbiggin to begin with the

⁴²³ *success*. *Dictionary.com. The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language* (4th Edition) (Houghton Mifflin Company, 2004 (accessed September 30, 2007), <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/success>

⁴²⁴ George Weigel, *The Cube and the Cathedral: Europe, America, and Politics without God* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

realization that it is in essentially the same condition as that in which it existed in the time of Augustine.⁴²⁵

This thesis does not mean to suggest that "success" is not a proper consideration whatsoever in such endeavors, but merely that success measured in terms of *effectiveness*, in terms of *terms* that can be measured, evaluated, corrected, implemented and re-measured, re-evaluated, corrected again and re-implemented like a Madison Avenue consumerist or Washington, D.C. Beltline consultant strategy, is not only wrong-headed and antithetical to the gospel of Jesus Christ, *it is idolatrous*. Whatever Jesus may have meant when he told his disciples to be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves, it was not this.

When Jesus poses the hypothetical question to his disciples whether he will find faith on earth when he returns, this is the only true metric he will have established. That faithfulness will be measured, not by whether Christians will have been successful in establishing his kingdom in his absence, but rather *in his presence*. God in Christ is not an absent parent who has asked his children to stay out of trouble while he is away briefly and intends to judge whether we cleaned the house to his satisfaction when he gets back home. When, in the parables up to and including the parable of the sheep and the goats in Matthew 25, Jesus conveys the criteria by which he will welcome his good and faithful servants, the criterion of faithfulness will be how faithfully one practiced community, how faithfully one practiced *mišpat*, *ṣḏāqā* and *hesed* towards the neighbor. This, in turn, leads us to the answer to the next question.

⁴²⁵ Lesslie Newbigin, *Truth to Tell: The Gospel as Public Truth* (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 15.

- *Should Christians aspire to and seek positions of power, and if so, how should that power be exercised?*

The answer to this question is both yes and no. Yes, because for Christians not to do so is to surrender the field to others and then to have the terms of the conversation dictated to them. When that occurs, James Clavell's *The Children's Story*, with its chilling scenario of children talked out of everything they have been taught was good and true in less than thirty minutes, is not an unrealistic scenario. This is what occurs when Neuhaus' "ersatz religion" occupies the high political ground unrestrained, and if the challenge of proclaiming the gospel in a society where post-modern, relativistic, multicultural political correctness is deemed offensive to certain Christian sensibilities, then one can only imagine a worse situation with such things taken to their logical extremes as they invariably are.

However, the answer is also no, because merely pursuing the same strategies that have failed the church so miserably in the past (and by all appearances are failing us in the present day) will not suffice if Christians are actually to be faithful to their calling. A different approach will be required. It is not an approach that will leave one feeling good. It is not an approach that will lead anyone to thank them. But it is the approach of faithfulness because it is the approach of Jesus.

The relationship of Christians towards power must be one whose wisdom exceeds Solomon's and whose righteousness exceeds Job's. It must recognize that the ability to control others is an illusion, for we are not even able to control ourselves. Deliverance from sin requires a savior, and it requires us to follow the savior's path

along the Via Dolorosa, the Via Crucis, if it is to yield the result of that path in the life of the believer. The way of the cross is the way of sorrow, and its relationship to power is the way of kenosis. It empties itself of its own prerogatives and seeks the good of the other.

What is the role of Christians in the public square in the Church's third millennium? The role is the same as it ever has been. Christians have been placed in the world in whatever context they may find themselves to render glory to God and to bear witness to the transformative power of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Why is it then that Christians find their perspective so unwelcome in matters related to public policy in the United States?

One suspects that the matter relates to the sad truth that Christians have expended a great deal of energy trying to be effective when the cause they advocated might have been better served had they instead expended the same energy trying to be faithful. In spite of taking Stanley Hauerwas and William Willimon to task over their interpretation of H. Richard Niebuhr, it must be admitted that they have diagnosed the essential nature of the church's present-day domesticity spot on. The church has tried to adopt the role of servant to society in the past, but in so doing, it has chosen a path of *servility* to the agenda of the secular society's need simply to be left alone until the time comes to pay the price for its unrestrained pursuit of freedom without obligation. Society wants the church to remain silent about those things that lead to dissolution and dissipation until such things yield their fruit, at which point society then wishes to indict the church for its failings and the weakness of its witness.

This is not the servanthood that this thesis advocates. The servanthood espoused here is the willing, self-emptying servanthood of the meek in the Beatitudes.

Meekness toward God is that disposition of spirit in which we accept His dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting. In the OT, the meek are those wholly relying on God rather than their own strength to defend them against injustice. Thus, meekness toward evil people means knowing God is permitting the injuries they inflict, that He is using them to purify His elect, and that He will deliver His elect in His time.⁴²⁶

The work of the School Building Solutions Committee proceeded from conception to initiation in fairly short order, while the development of the concept for this thesis project lagged behind it but very closely. As a result, the design of the project evolved as it was ongoing. A possible improvement in the project would have engaged more members of the Committee in the interview and survey. This would have involved a broader cross section of the members, possibly including the entire Committee, which would have made the Hopewell survey instrument a far more useful tool in assessing the religious outlook of its members relative to one another. However, a concern at the time was the lack of awareness regarding the viewpoints of many of these members who were unacquainted with the author. Inclusion of additional members potentially would have yielded a richer, comprehensive picture of the spiritual makeup of the Committee rather than simply their political and professional backgrounds. Instead, participants were selected who were willing and with whom the author had prior relationships and thus some indication of their potential interest and inclinations.

⁴²⁶ Thayer and Smith, *Greek Lexicon Entry for Praus*, <http://www.biblestudytools.net/Lexicons/Greek/grk.cgi?number=4239&version=kjv> (accessed September 29, 2007).

Another potential enhancement would involve broader inclusion of elected officials serving on the local governing bodies. These persons were responsible for appointing the members of the Committee, and the ability to correlate their spiritual orientations to those of their appointees would have been fertile soil for examining that facet of the dynamics surrounding, not only the Committee's work, but also the engagement of these public officials in the related community issues. Such an analysis might provide further insight into the apparent dichotomy between the high degree of faith-based social capital and the high degree of racial mistrust.

The inclusion of more respondents is almost always valuable in any statistical analysis. Hopewell noted that the closer the pastor was to the group mean for a congregation participating in the survey, the greater the likelihood of that pastor's longevity in the call.⁴²⁷ The inclusion of this broader base of response would have provided a more realistic comparison of the group mean with Governor Martin's response, allowing a possible correlation between the two in order to evaluate his selection as the group's leader relative to the people whom he had been asked to lead. In fact, conducted immediately prior to the Committee beginning its work, such an evaluation relative to the leader's potential success in leading the group versus the actual outcome would have provided potentially valuable insights as well as a leading indicator of that outcome.

The potential exists for future work regarding insights and concepts developed during the course of researching and reflecting on the context of this thesis. During the development of the conceptual basis for the covenantal framework described in Chapter 3 and during

⁴²⁷ Hopewell, 98.

subsequent conversations with the interviewees and others not involved with the project, a number of persons expressed a receptivity to dialogue under such a framework. Much remains to be learned regarding *mišpat*, *šēdāqā'* and *hesed*, the three elements of this triadic covenantal framework. The concepts are far too rich historically, culturally and linguistically to be understood adequately if initiating a fuller dialogue around this framework is desired apart from a more substantial consideration than is given in this thesis. The reflections on them in Chapter 2 are but a small step in what is hopefully the right direction, but there are far more steps to be taken. Further research and consideration might yield a fruitful basis for implementing the dialogue this framework describes.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote:

It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living among other Christians. Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the Cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes. There is his commission, his work. "The Kingdom is to be in the midst of your enemies. And he who will not suffer this does not want to be of the kingdom of Christ; he wants to be among friends, to sit among roses in lilies, not with the band people but the devout people. O you blasphemers and betrayers of Christ! If Christ had done what you are doing who would ever have been spared?" (Luther).⁴²⁸

What value does such a project as this one hold for the broader mission and ministry of Christ's church in the world? The primary value of this project is that it places the context for Christian mission in the local community in a familiar locale, one in which the vast majority of church members have more than passing acquaintance and more than a passing interest—the public education system and the challenges it faces. Most church members will have been educated in such public schools; a fairly high number of them will also have sent or will be sending their children through such a system as the Charlotte-Mecklenburg

⁴²⁸ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper, 1954), 17-18.

Schools. Such an experience is a great equalizer across the boundaries of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and educational background. The public schools can be a context for unifying a community, or in the case of CMS, a point for dividing it.

Even as Christ has torn down the walls of separation that divide Christians one from another, so he calls those whom he has loved to join in that work of reconciliation. But such a reconciliation can only be accomplished under the cross of Jesus Christ. Bonhoeffer also wrote in relation to the confession of sin between fellow Christians:

It is not experience of life that experience of the Cross that makes one a worthy hearer of confessions. The most experienced psychologist for observer of human nature knows infinitely less of the human heart and the simplest Christian who is beneath the cross of Jesus. The greatest psychological insight, ability, and experience cannot grasp this one thing: what sin is. Worldly wisdom knows what distress and weakness and failure are, but it does not know the godlessness of man. And so it also does not know that man is destroyed only by his sin and can be healed only by forgiveness. Only the Christian knows this. In the presence of a psychiatrist I can only be a sick man; in the presence of a Christian brother I can dare to be a sinner. The psychiatrist must first search my heart and yet he never plums in its ultimate depth. The Christian brother knows when I come to him: here is a sinner like myself, a godless man who wants to confess and yearns for God's forgiveness. The psychiatrist views me as if there were no God. The brother views me as I am before the judging and merciful God in the Cross of Jesus Christ. It is not lack of psychological knowledge but lack of love for the crucified Jesus Christ that makes us so poor and inefficient in brotherly confession.⁴²⁹

This knowledge that enables Christians to confess their sin to one another in community is the same knowledge that enables and empowers the meek disciple of Jesus Christ to step outside the walls of the church as a missionary to his or her community of residence. It is this same knowledge of God, neighbor and self and the relationship of one to the other, viewed beneath the cross of Jesus Christ, that enables and empowers the Christian believer, *simul iustus et peccator*, recast in the spiritual $\mu\omicron\rho\phi\eta\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ of which Christ emptied himself, to follow this, the way of kenosis.

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 118-119.

This is the community of resident aliens that Hauerwas and Willimon believe the church is called to be. Perhaps they are correct—perhaps the transformation called for by Richard Niebuhr is not radical enough. For generations, Presbyterians have prided themselves in the roots of the federal republican form of government in the United States of America found in Presbyterian polity. Perhaps the upward call of God in Christ Jesus for Presbyterians, heard in the critique of cultural Protestantism by Hauerwas and Willimon, is to offer this nation yet one more gift—the witness of the community of the redeemed, displaying encouragement in Christ, consolation from love, sharing in the spirit, displaying compassion and sympathy, making Christ's joy complete by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind; a community that does nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regarding others as better than themselves, looking not to its own interests but to the interests of others.

Such a mission is one in which the hands of the missionary will get dirty. No one will thank them. In fact, when done faithfully, the near-term result may be persecution, but to those who would undertake such a mission, may they hear the Word of the Lord: "In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!"

EPILOGUE

The narrative of this case study begs an ending, a resolution to the tensions presented, and so it is appropriate to end, as this thesis began, with personal recollection. In the intervening months since the School Building Solutions Committee made its June 27, 2006 presentation to the County Commission and Board of Education, both of these boards, as well as the voters, have had the opportunity to react to its recommendations, and these outcomes are shared here.

The Board of Education was quick to approve the recommendations of the Committee at its July 11, 2006 meeting. The request from the Board of Education mirrored the recommendation of the Committee:

1. Request that the Board of County Commissioners authorize the issuance of Certificates of Participation in the amount of \$171,831,648 for the projects listed on page 5 of the Final Report of the School Building Solutions Committee, dated June 27, 2006.
2. Direct the Superintendent to take the next steps for the Board of Education to submit a request to the Board of County Commissioners for a November 2007 Bond referendum that would cover all capital needs for CMS until November 2009, anticipated to be no more than \$400 million.
3. Direct the Superintendent to continue working with the County Manager to propose a collaborative process for examining and evaluating additional cost saving methods in new construction, renovation and additions, with a target of achieving at least a 10% reduction in total construction costs without reducing square footage of buildings.⁴³⁰

⁴³⁰ Mecklenburg County, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina School Facilities 2006 Capital Project Ordinance.

<http://www.charmeck.org/NR/rdonlyres/ewern2w527ld6dvv3phy6a7fae7w3qrrf74662xzbr5d7lcvsx3hj4b76unvz4l6bw5q4qd62kvwxypcynlsbcbwlz4b/August150606b.doc> (accessed February 17, 2008).

The Committee's recommendation for COPs appeared to have the momentum to carry through to full approval by the elected officials of Mecklenburg County, but when the Board of Education's request came before the County Commission on July 18, 2006, something entirely different occurred. While the entire five-member Democratic majority of the Commission had signaled to the voters in 2005 that they had no intention of approving COPs if the November 2005 referendum failed, in July 2006, only Wilhelmenia Rembert and Norman Mitchell refused to reconsider their position and refused to vote in favor of the recommendation. This created a window of opportunity for the three-member Republican minority on the Commission to renegotiate their position. With Commissioners Rembert, Mitchell, Valerie Woodard and the three Republicans opposed to the Board of Education request, the motion to approve this request failed.

The CMS request was renegotiated with the CMS staff, members of the Board of Education and members of the County Commission, and at the next County Commission meeting on August 15, 2006, seven of the nine members approved a request for \$123,165,000, which provided funding for the following projects:

Alexander Graham MS – Phase I	Alexander MS
Cochrane MS	North Tryon St./Pavilion Blvd. Area ES
Harding High Phase I	Idlewild ES
Mandates/Initiatives Lifecycle	New Bailey Rd. Area HS
New Belmeade Rd. Area MS	New Belmeade Rd. ES
New Bradley ES	New Hucks Rd. Area ES
New Matthews/Mint Hill Area HS	New Providence Rd. West Area ES
New Ridge Rd. Area MS	North Mecklenburg HS – Phase I
Palisades MS and HS	Sedgefield MS – Phase I
South Mecklenburg HS	Long Creek ES

However, perhaps tipping their hats to the School Building Solutions Committee minority report advocates who had pressed for consideration of innovative approaches to school

construction, including public-private partnerships, the County Commission approved funding for pre-construction and design work rather than full construction costs for six projects using the lease/purchase method approved under North Carolina General

Assembly Senate Bill S2009:

- New Providence Road West Elementary
- New Hucks Road Elementary
- Idlewild Elementary
- Harding High School
- Long Creek Elementary
- South Mecklenburg High School

Eventually, it would also be necessary to provide full emergency funding for the construction of the Elon Park elementary school, and this also was provided by means of COPs approved by the County Commission in December 2006. In all, by the time the final amount of approved COPs was tallied up, the County Commission had funded \$_____ million in construction and renovation projects, close to the amount that the School Building Solutions Committee had requested in the first place.

However, the true test of the School Building Solution Committee's framework would be the outcome of the community's debate in 2007 regarding the sizing and composition of the Board of Education's two-year capital funding request and the general obligation bond referendum that would finance it. During the fall of 2006, the Superintendent's Standards Review Committee, a group of citizens, educators and engineering and construction professionals appointed by CMS Superintendent Peter Gorman met to review and provide recommendations regarding baseline facilities standards and construction methods for CMS, providing a community voice regarding the types of facilities that CMS should be building and the methods by which they should be built in order to minimize construction costs

without adversely impacting classroom instruction. This review fulfilled one of the recommendations of the School Building Solutions Committee. I had the privilege of serving on that committee.

Additionally, CMS developed a prioritization matrix for its construction and renovation projects. This matrix factored in a number of elements affecting the priority of a project, i.e., relief of overcrowding, addressing health and safety issues, addressing long-range maintenance considerations, etc., and assigned various point values and multipliers to those considerations, and while not completely removing subjectivity from the prioritization process, it nonetheless added a great deal of transparency to the objective measures being applied.⁴³¹

On January 23, 2007, the Superintendent's Standards Review Committee presented its recommendations to the Board of Education. The most controversial of these recommendations concerned the sharing of athletic facilities such as football stadiums and gymnasiums and sharing auditoriums. This recommendation held forth the promise of saving millions of dollars on facilities, but in a system where facilities inequity was already a hot button issue between competing groups in the community, this recommendation had the effect of pouring gasoline on a fire. Also, CMS staff presented a revised ten-year plan incorporating the new prioritization matrix. In addition to prioritizing its anticipated needs over the next ten years, the plan also proposed thirty-three projects costing roughly \$410 million over the coming two years. This two-year request would form the core around

⁴³¹ The process went a long way toward addressing my own concerns with the prioritization process used by CMS because it essentially mirrored the process used by my employer to evaluate proposed nuclear plant modifications.

which the subsequent debate about the coming bond referendum would be held. The amount of the request also corresponded roughly to the amount recommended by the School Building Solutions Committee.

At around the same time, the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee began its review of the FY 2008 capital budget for Mecklenburg County. As in most such reviews, the CMS request promised to comprise the lion's share of the budget recommendation. Although differing in some specifics, the Committee's consensus soon formed around support of the CMS staff's recommendation from January 23, 2007. As the Committee's chairman, I became the most vocal supporter of that recommendation and wrote our Committee's recommendation for that portion of the budget.

However, the Board of Education adopted what I considered to be a far riskier strategy. Rather than adopt the CMS staff recommendation, the Board pursued a familiar strategy of elevating certain projects higher in the priority list than the staff had recommended in order to garner support for the overall request within certain parts of the community. When the debate was over, the Board's request had increased to roughly \$617 million.

There exists on both the Board of Education and the County Commission, in all elected bodies for that matter, a strong sentiment that they are the elected officials, and that although they may respect the recommendations provided by various advisory committees, they are the ones who are ultimately accountable for the decisions and their outcomes. In fact, some members of these elected bodies take great offense at any suggestion that citizen advisory committee recommendations would "dictate" or compel their decisions. However,

it might also be argued that elected officials come and go, every two years in the case of county commissioners and every four years in the case of Board of Education members, and that the recommendations of staff members who remain year after year to enact whatever policies are adopted also carry some measure of weight.

The magnitude of the Board of Education's request seemed designed both to advocate on behalf of very much needed projects and, at the same time and in response to two years of being called incompetent, to send the message that *they* were the elected officials, and *they, not* the School Building Solutions Committee, *not* the CMS staff, *not* the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee, would determine the magnitude of *their* request according to *their* own counsel and wisdom. In my own estimation and that of my committee, such a strategy, mirroring the very process whereby the Board of Education had taken our 2005 recommendation, added over \$40 million to it and seen it defeated resoundingly, seemed doomed to repeat the process, something the community could ill afford.

The debate was further complicated by the fact that Governor Martin then publicly endorsed the Board of Education's \$617 million request, believing that the consequences of another failed bond referendum were worse than standing by the School Building Solutions Committee's recommended amount. Thus, on June 19, 2007, when I presented the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee's recommendations to the County Commission, I was then in the position of having to defend a recommendation based in part on fidelity with the School Building Solutions Committee's recommended cap when the Committee's chairman

had endorsed exceeding that cap.⁴³² That presentation likewise resulted in further drama, as Peter Gorman, seated in the audience, was invited down to the podium during the question and answer period of my presentation to counter my assertions. Dr. Gorman had come merely to observe and had not intended to engage in such a debate, adding to an already uncomfortable situation where I, in essence, defended his staff's recommendation while he had to defend a differing request from his Board.

Over the next few weeks, the Republican minority rallied around the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee's \$486 million recommendation,⁴³³ while the Democratic majority rallied around the \$617 million CMS request that had also been recommended by the County Manager. However, sensing an opportunity to wield a measure of power as a swing vote, Democrat Valerie Woodard signaled support for a much lower number than her fellow Democrats, settling in around \$500 million. The resulting political negotiations eventually led to the County Commission approving a bond referendum in the amount of \$516 million.

Two closely related events came into play that fall as the community began to consider the merits of the various recommendations versus the amount that the Board of Education had

⁴³² In other forums, Governor Martin and I would subsequently present differing views on that recommendation.

⁴³³ This figure was comprised of roughly \$400 million of projects, \$56 million of cost escalation (a consideration that had not figured into the School Building Solution Committee's recommendation) and \$30 million for land acquisition (another item that had not figured separately into the School Building Solution Committee's recommendation).

requested. In parallel with this consideration, opposition arose to further proposed expansion of light rail due to large cost overruns on the south line. This opposition took the form of an effort to repeal a transit-related sales tax, thus denying the transit authority the funding that would be required for further expansion of the rail system.

Leading and funding this effort was Jay Morrison, a Republican activist who had opposed the 2005 referendum and would run at-large for the Board of Education that fall, opposing the CMS bond request. However, when allegations concerning Mr. Morrison's personal finances and related conduct emerged in the local media, he withdrew from the race and from an active role in the bond and transit tax opposition. As a result, no significant opposition to either referendum arose. With the business community pouring significant resources into a pro-transit tax, pro-CMS bond request campaign, and perhaps due either to voters' remorse over the effects of the 2005 bond referendum defeat, or to their CMS-fatigue, or perhaps some combination of all of the above, on November 6, 2007, the voters defeated the transit tax repeal and approved the CMS bond referendum by resounding majorities.

As a final postscript, on December 11, 2007, the Board of Education appointed Budd D. Berro and reappointed Allen Anderson as their liaisons to the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory Committee. In so doing they declined overwhelmingly to reappoint Rhonda Lennon. Ms. Lennon was deemed by the majority of the Board to have represented the interests of CMS inadequately during her service on the Citizens' Capital Budget Advisory

Committee and as a member of the minority faction of the School Building Solutions Committee. Although she had supported both the 2005 and the 2007 bond referenda publicly and had lost her effort to unseat Larry Gauvreau as the District 1 Board of Education representative in large measure due to her support of the 2005 bond referendum, those on the Board of Education opposed to her reappointment characterized her in 2007 as a CMS bond opponent. I would argue that no single individual in Mecklenburg County over the past ten years has done more to serve that community and to heighten its awareness of the facilities needs of CMS than Rhonda Lennon, and no single individual has sacrificed and suffered more as a result of that support than she has.

One may not argue over matters of personal preference, but for the Board of Education to deny Ms. Lennon's reappointment based on a trumped up accusation of representing its interests inadequately was the height of ingratitude. I can only conclude with the words of my maternal grandfather to the effect that if one would play Jesus in the world, one should be prepared to be crucified.

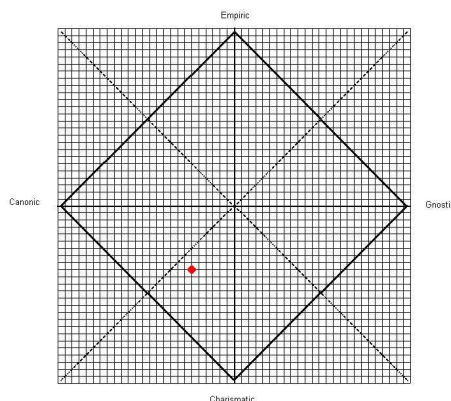
APPENDIX

Additionally, those persons interviewed were asked to complete a survey taken from James F. Hopewell's book, *Congregation: Stories and Structures*. Because he found the use of a bipolar scale to describe the worldview of a congregation, such as "conservative" versus "liberal" to be wholly inadequate to the complexity of worldview he encountered, Hopewell adopted a "quadripolar" scale.

Although one type, which I call canonic, did express a kind of conservative standpoint, and although another, which I call empiric, conveyed the outlook of many liberals, those two categories did not exhaust the interpretive options that members employed in their stories. I also found orientations that I came to call the gnostic and the charismatic categories. The four categories can be differentiated in the following manner:

<i>Canonic</i>	Reliance upon an authoritative interpretation of a world pattern, often considered God's revealed word or will, by which one identifies one's essential life. The integrity of the pattern requires that followers reject any gnosis of union with the pattern but instead subordinate their selfhood to it.
<i>Gnostic</i>	Reliance upon an intuited process of a world that develops from dissipation toward unity. The ultimate integrity of the world requires the deepening consciousness of those involved in its systemic outworking and their rejection of alienating canonic structures.
<i>Charismatic</i>	Reliance upon evidence of a transcendent spirit personally encountered. The integrity of providence in the world requires that empirical presumptions of an ordered world be disregarded and supernatural instead be witnessed.
<i>Empiric</i>	Reliance upon data objectively verifiable through one's own five senses. The integrity of one's own person requires realism about the way things demonstrably work and the rejection of the supernatural.

Hopewell's methodology, by means of a survey, seeks to orient a congregation at some point along a four point continuum as seen in the figure below.



Hopewell's Quadripolar Assessment Grid

By asking questions pertaining to how one considers God or the church to be at work within the context of hypothetical crises, Hopewell believed this spoke more to the respondent's worldview than responses to doctrinal questions.⁴³⁴ The questions are four-part multiple choice answer questions, and the responses to these questions are intended to be typical of the kind of answer each of the four worldview categories would offer. The respondent then chooses the response that most clearly reflects their perspective.

The number of responses in each category is tallied, and then the difference between the number of canonic responses and gnostic responses is plotted against the difference between the number of charismatic responses and empiric responses. In this manner, the respondent can be seen to fall within a certain quadrant that describes them relative to this continuum. As an example, the red point in this figure represents the results of the test as completed by the author.

Taken together with the raw text of the interviews conducted as part of this thesis, the use of this survey and assessment tool allowed the responses of the interviewees to be interpreted further in light of that individual's theological worldview. This allowed embedded presuppositions regarding the role of a Christian in the public square to emerge in the interpretive phase of the case study, opening up possibilities for analysis and critique, as well as potentially new insights.

Furthermore, since Hopewell's survey is primarily an assessment of *congregations* rather than *individuals*, the greatest benefit of using it in this context is in determining what it reveals

⁴³⁴ Merriam, 80.

about the *group* of Christians under consideration rather than each individual. This is not to say that no benefit is derived by understanding the orientation of each individual. But Hopewell noted that the closer the pastor was to the group mean for a congregation participating in the survey, the greater the likelihood of that pastor's longevity in the call.⁴³⁵ As such, a comparison of the group mean with Governor Martin's response allows for a measure of comparison to the people whom he was asked to lead, potentially leading to the discovery of a possible correlation between the two. However, it is also entirely possible that no such correlation would be found. In fact, a broad scatter of data among the respondents would provide an equally valuable indication that little in the way of common worldview existed in the group, thus illuminating the extraordinary leadership challenge faced in this effort.

The survey questions were four-part multiple choice questions. The respondent was asked to choose the response that most clearly reflected their perspective. The number of responses in each category was tallied, and then the difference between the number of canonic responses and gnostic responses was plotted against the difference between the number of charismatic responses and empiric responses. The following are the questions each respondent was asked:

1. At its best my faith is:
 - a. concerned for humanity's highest values
 - b. filled with the Holy Spirit
 - c. born again with Christ
 - d. aware of my own divinity
2. When I die:
 - a. God will continue to bless and keep me
 - b. I shall then be with Christ

⁴³⁵ James F. Hopewell, *Congregation: Stories and Structures* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 98.

- c. I journey on toward greater oneness with God
 - d. what will be, will be
3. When I see a picture of a starving child, I think that:
- a. if everyone did God's will, this would not happen
 - b. the child is nevertheless a spiritual being nourished in other ways
 - c. we live in an unfair society
 - d. God is with him and can ease his troubles
4. I feel that I mature as I:
- a. seek and receive God's gifts
 - b. follow God's plan for me
 - c. learn to love
 - d. realize the divine potential within me
5. Jesus Christ provides:
- a. salvation from my sins
 - b. miraculous power in my own life
 - c. an example of life in tune with the absolute
 - d. freedom and self-reliance
6. I get in touch with God primarily through:
- a. deep study of the Bible
 - b. experiences of God's presence with me
 - c. close human relationships
 - d. shutting out the world and communing with my innermost self
7. Worship is most meaningful:
- a. at times of mystery and silence
 - b. when the Word is faithfully heard
 - c. in the midst of a caring community
 - d. when God's Spirit is manifested
8. When a young mother has cancer:
- a. I know she could find real peace in the Bible
 - b. I know that life often contains great suffering
 - c. I must realize that all things work together for highest good
 - d. I pray that God will heal her
9. Were a person close to me dying, I would:
- a. find strength to persevere
 - b. expect comfort from God
 - c. recognize how divine life sheds the limits of this world
 - d. stress the importance of the state of that person's salvation
10. In the worst times of my life I find:
- a. the divinity within me shows my troubles to be less crucial
 - b. comfort in verses from the Bible

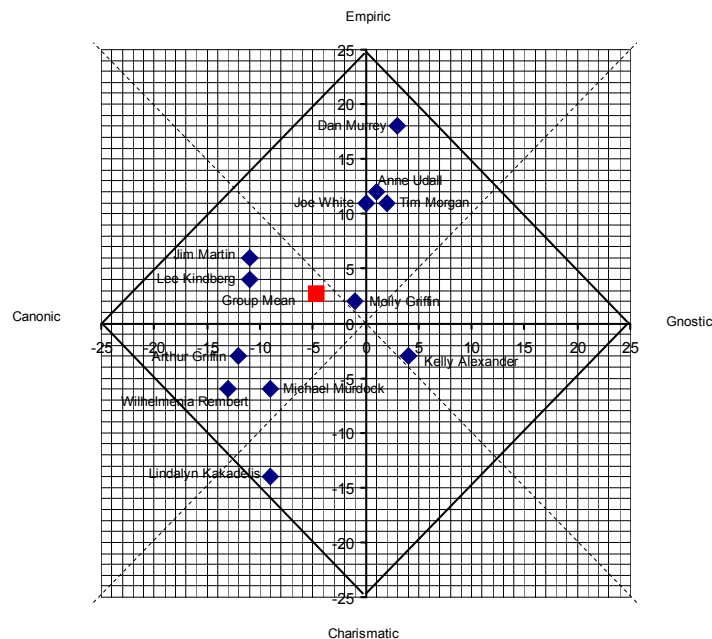
- c. patience until better times
 - d. God blessing me in new ways
11. Some non-Christian people claim the ability to predict the future. I think:
- a. these predictions may reflect their contact with universal intelligence
 - b. they are empowered by the devil
 - c. they are probably mistaken
 - d. the only disclosure of the future is what is written in Christian scripture
12. I would like the next pastor of my church to be gifted in:
- a. presenting sound Christian doctrine
 - b. bringing in God's power
 - c. deepening our fellowship with each other
 - d. uncovering the untapped powers of the mind
13. In the future I want to:
- a. ask God for all the blessings God has in store for me
 - b. cultivate deeper levels of consciousness
 - c. really get into the Bible
 - d. be honestly who I am
14. As I see it, the world:
- a. contains a mixture of good and bad
 - b. is only the surface expression of divine reality
 - c. is the place where God is emerging victorious
 - d. would improve were we to fulfill the mission God has given us
15. When someone I knew died, I was basically:
- a. consoled that death is an illusion of this world
 - b. thankful for (or concerned about) the person's relations with Christ
 - c. strengthened by God's closeness
 - d. troubled by the loss
16. God enters my life most decisively in:
- a. my deep commitments
 - b. answers to prayers
 - c. the peace and harmony I discover
 - d. the rules by which to lead a good life
17. After I got acquainted with the new pastor in my church, I hope that we would:
- a. see each other as ordinary friends
 - b. share testimony about our wonderful growth in Christ
 - c. explore the signs that reveal God's truth
 - d. learn together from God's scripture
18. As a citizen I follow the laws of my country because:
- a. disobedience obscures the divine pattern
 - b. I agree with the laws

- c. God blesses those who pray and obey
 - d. I am to obey the authorities
19. God speaks to me:
- a. through the words of the Bible
 - b. through the power I share with all of life
 - c. through meaningful human relationships
 - d. sometimes directly
20. When someone I love is very ill, I pray that this person:
- a. be miraculously healed
 - b. accept the will of God in this situation
 - c. gain awareness of healing participation in divine perfection
 - d. be skillfully cared for by doctors
21. Satan is:
- a. an old way of talking about evil in the world
 - b. a name for the illusion that blocks full consciousness
 - c. the ruler of the damned
 - d. active in individuals today
22. Were my family to suffer deep financial loss, I would:
- a. look for God to change the situation
 - b. nevertheless prosper according to the principles of divine abundance
 - c. adjust and go on
 - d. obey God
23. Earlier this year a neighbor complained that a ghost was in her house. I think that:
- a. it could be a demon and be driven away by the power of Christ
 - b. she should move beyond such negative forms of thought
 - c. such a strange occurrence should lead her to God
 - d. there is probably a scientific explanation for her experience
24. When someone grows senile, I think that situation is:
- a. part of God's will that someday we may understand
 - b. a temporary condition not truly showing his continuing progress toward God
 - c. still ripe for God's blessing that person
 - d. just an unfortunate fact of life
25. In the next decade our nation:
- a. will be faced with critical decisions
 - b. could escape its present level of discord
 - c. will be punished if it fails to live up to its covenant with God
 - d. must claim the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit
26. To me a horoscope drawn up by an expert:
- a. is dangerous because it brings ungodly powers into your life
 - b. is wrong because God, not the stars, determines my life

- c. may be helpful
- d. may be entertaining but is otherwise worthless

27. In listening to a sermon I feel dissatisfied unless the minister preaches:
- a. about our unity with God
 - b. a spirit-filled message
 - c. a convicting message from the Bible
 - d. with reference to everyday situations

Survey results were tabulated for the interviewees and then plotted as shown below.



Kelly Alexander exhibits a dominant gnostic orientation with a charismatic influence. This would suggest in him an intuitive tendency towards seeing a oneness of all creation moving toward unity through the providential and powerful work of God's Spirit in overcoming structures of alienation and oppression. It is both interesting and somehow appropriate that although Mr. Alexander occupies a quadrant alone, nonetheless he is located close to the center of the grid, suggesting an ability to negotiate between extremes, which, as will be discussed further below, may explain in part his influential role in the outcome. Molly

Griffin, who at this time is the vice chair of the Board of Education (Kit Cramer served as vice chair during the time of the School Building Solutions Committee's work), displays a similar centrist political style. Unsurprisingly, she occupies the centermost position of all the respondents. Of all the current members of the Board of Education, it is Ms. Griffin who seems most visibly disturbed by the rancor of the Board members towards each other.

Surprisingly and yet unsurprisingly, Lee Kindberg and Jim Martin occupy roughly the same location on the grid. Both of them hold a Ph.D. in Chemistry, but coming from very different religious upbringings (Dr. Kindberg was reared alternating between Methodist and Baptist congregations, although in her interview, she indicated her discomfort with the Baptist congregation she and her husband attended early in their marriage because of its views on the roles of women;⁴³⁶ Governor Martin was reared a child of the Presbyterian manse), one might expect some divergence. However, given the generally canonic leanings of many southern Protestant denominations during the times and places in which both were reared, their shared religious outlook, with a dominant canonic outlook moderated by an empiric influence, is not entirely unexpected. In fact, the empiric influences in Governor Martin's religious outlook and the importance of his vocation as a scientist were very evident during his interview. In responding to the opening question regarding his upbringing and his current faith context, it was particularly telling of this influence that Governor Martin discussed his upbringing in very general terms but when discussing his adult faith engagement, he focused on the challenges for scientists he saw in the 1950s surrounding the

⁴³⁶ Lee Kindberg, interview with the author, February 19, 2007.

creation versus evolution debates, speaking particularly in terms of the evidence of creation in chemistry, biology, geology and astrophysics that he had shared in Bible studies he taught.

The general correspondence between the outlook of Arthur Griffin, Lindalyn Kakadelis, Wilhelmenia Rembert and the author does come as a surprise in some respects. Mr. Griffin and Dr. Rembert were reared in African-American churches, but they were reared in different denominational traditions, Griffin in the Baptist church in Charlotte prior to becoming a Presbyterian after marriage⁴³⁷ and Dr. Rembert attending a wide variety of non-denominational churches concurrently in Sumter, South Carolina, eventually becoming a member of Baptist congregations in Charlotte. Ms. Kakadelis was reared in the Southern Baptist church and remained a Baptist until her husband was called as an associate pastor for Forest Hill Church in Charlotte, at that time a congregation in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The author, on the other hand, had absolutely no religious upbringing whatsoever and with no particular theological inclination, could just as easily have ended up in one of the Southern Baptist, non-denominational or Lutheran congregations he passed through before coming to rest in evangelical Presbyterianism. In fact, the initial point of contact between the author and Ms. Kakadelis was his earlier membership and continuing connection to Forest Hill Church as the congregation in which he first came to faith.

⁴³⁷ Arthur Griffin, e-mail to the author, September 28, 2007.

Ordinarily, it would be far too simplistic and perhaps even bigoted to say that the connection between Mr. Griffin and Dr. Rembert is their shared heritage in African-American churches, as though the African-American church and African-American culture in general are monolithic. The same might be said of a common Baptist heritage. However, the emphasis in the civil rights movement was a central piece of their African-American church experience. Both Ms. Kakadelis⁴³⁸ and the author profess a strong affinity to issues of justice, social and otherwise, and it is not unreasonable to consider this concern to be a common link between all four persons. Indeed, it is suspected that were one of the many spiritual gifts inventories administered to all four individuals, each would probably display a strong inclination towards prophetic ministry forms and kerygmatic expressions. This seems in concert with the combined reliance on a strong authoritative basis for faith, expressing itself in various manifestations of God's Spirit moving in the world to bring justice.

Dan Murrey was reared in a Methodist congregation in middle Tennessee, attended a Presbyterian college where he majored in religion prior to attending medical school, and currently is a member of a Baptist congregation.⁴³⁹ Joe White was also reared in a Methodist congregation, but he became a Presbyterian after marrying a Southern Baptist in one of the familiar negotiations between newly married couples from differing denominational backgrounds.⁴⁴⁰ Tim Morgan, on the other hand, is a lifelong Presbyterian,⁴⁴¹ and Anne

⁴³⁸ Lindalyn Kakadelis, interview with the author, May 25, 2007.

⁴³⁹ Dan Murrey, interview with the author, July 30, 2007.

⁴⁴⁰ Joe White, interview with the author, March 20, 2007.

⁴⁴¹ Tim Morgan, interview with the author, July 27, 2007.

Udall, much like the author in his youth, professes no particular faith in Christ, although possessing a spiritual yearning.⁴⁴² Thus, one is hard-pressed to find a commonality in religious expression between these four persons, particularly between Mr. White, Mr. Morgan and Dr. Udall. However, a common reliance on empirical data and rationality may provide a link between all four. This is particularly affirmed by the fact that although all four display a decidedly empiric outlook, to the extent that they are influenced by the other categories, it is only in the gnostic direction, and barely so at that.

The data do not seem to support drawing broad, sweeping conclusions regarding the inclinations of Christians who have chosen to be engaged in the public square. However, one suspects that the Apostle Paul would have a ready explanation:

Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully. (Romans 12:4-8, NIV)

With regard to the group mean, this data point is located in the canonic-empiric quadrant, close to the origin of the grid. The location of this mean suggests that at least as far as the group of interviewees is concerned, the aggregate orientation of the sample is overall very centrist. Its location in the canonic-empiric quadrant also suggests that from the perspective of theological orientation, Jim Martin was an excellent choice to lead the School Building Solutions Committee. The selection of interviewees was largely subjective and based on the author's personal acquaintance with the respondents. However, the overall spread of the

⁴⁴² Anne Udall, interview with the author, March 13, 2007.

data sample suggests that this selection, whether by intuition or blind luck, may have been more representative of the inclination of the Committee than initially expected.

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